

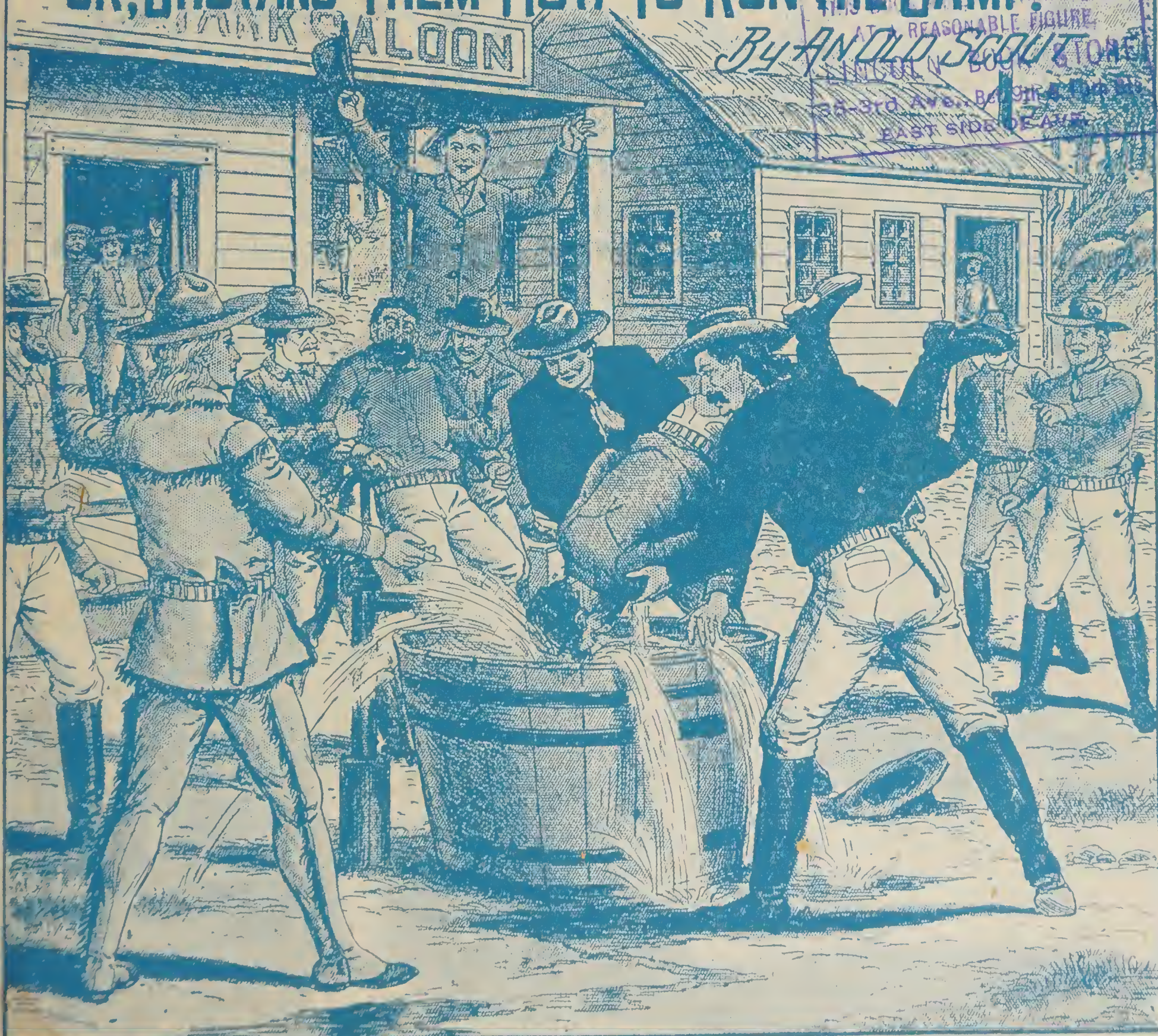
WILD WEST

No. 730.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 13, 1916.

Price 5 Cents.

YOUNG WILD WEST AT MAGIC MARK; OR, SHOWING THEM HOW TO RUN THE CAMP.



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WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1916, in the office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C., by Frank Lousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York
Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as Second-Class Matter.

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Young Wild West at Magic Mark

—OR—

SHOWING THEM HOW RUN THE CAMP

By AN OLD SCOUT

TAKEN BACK
AT A REASONABLE FIGURE
LINCOLN BOOK STORE
35-3rd Ave., Bet. 9th & 10th Sts.
EAST SIDE OF AVE.

CHAPTER I

DUCKING THE BADMEN.

As the old-fashioned stagecoach rolled up and came to a halt in front of the two principal shanties in the mining camp of Magic Mark, Montana, one fine afternoon in the early summer not many years ago, a motley crowd of men came rushing out to catch a glimpse of the new arrivals, if there were any.

At the time of which we write Magic Mark was one of the many little dots on the partly unexplored region of the country known as the wild West.

Its total population consisted of sixty-two souls, of whom fifty-six were men, four women, one child and a Chinaman.

That is the way big scar-faced Hen Holt, the ruler of the camp, put it when he was explaining things to three new arrivals but a few minutes before the stagecoach arrived.

"Magic Mark is a hustlin' town," he said, "an' anyone as don't like the way we runs things here has either got to light out or else die with his boots on. Everybody does as he pleases here, as long as me an' ther gang thinks it's all right; an' if we don't think it's all right we jest make it all right. I'm a hurricane from Missouri, an' when I gits mad I chews glass!"

Hen Holt was one of the first to come out of the Bed Rock saloon when the stagecoach halted, and he stood there ready to dispute the right of anyone becoming a citizen of the camp, provided he did not take kindly to him.

There was only one passenger, and he was a young man dressed in "store clothes," as the miners put it.

As he stepped to the ground with a well worn valise in his hand, the driver of the outfit drove off to his feeding quarters, leaving his passenger where he had agreed to deliver him—"right in front of ther Bed Rock tavern."

"Ha, ha, boys! Here's a tenderfoot for us!" cried the so-called leader of Magic Mark. "Jest see how innocent he looks. I wonder where he was raised, anyhow?"

"Gentlemen," said the young man, ignoring the remark and looking at the crowd in general, "can I find accommodations in this tavern?"

"Oh, yes, boss! Come right in!" spoke up the owner of the place, who was standing in the doorway. "You kin get plenty to eat here an' a good bed to sleep on. An' our prices is reasonable, too, boss."

The stranger stepped forward to enter the place, but before he put his foot upon the little stoop of the place Hen Holt jerked a revolver from his belt and fired a shot.

The bullet went through the young man's valise quite close to the handle, and feeling the shock from it, he let it drop with a startled cry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

Several of the men burst into violent laughing fits, just as though it was the funniest thing they had ever witnessed.

"Young feller, pick up that grip," was the rash command that came from the ruler of Magic Mark as soon as he could stop his laughter. "Pick it up, or I'll fill you full of holes."

"Gentlemen," said the stranger, looking around him imploringly, "is this the way you treat strangers in Magic Mark? I came here to settle down and work and become a peaceful citizen. Is there no one here who will protect me against this ruffian?"

"Not a one!" roared Hen Holt, as he fired another shot and came within an ace of hitting the young man's foot. "There ain't no one here who dares to tell me to stop, even."

"Oh, I guess there is!" exclaimed an easy voice, right near him.

Turning, the blustering badman beheld one of the three new arrivals he had been talking to but a few minutes before.

It was only a boy who had spoken up in defense of the tenderfoot, for he was not more than twenty—certainly not yet twenty-one.

He was of medium height, and possessed a physique that any athlete might be proud of, while his face was handsome, and the flowing chestnut hair which hung to his shoulders set it off as a frame lends beauty to a picture.

Attired in a suit of buckskin, trimmed with red silk fringe, and wearing a belt with two holsters and a sheath of a bowie knife attached to it, the young fellow certainly looked as though he ought to be respected.

The butts of a pair of revolvers protruded from the holsters, and the bowie was in its place in the sheath.

But when he spoke to Hen Holt in such an unexpected manner he did not so much as touch either of the weapons.

The ruler of the camp was surprised, so much, in fact, that he stared blankly at the speaker.

But another disreputable looking fellow stepped up to help him out.

"Who in thunder are you, young fellow?" he demanded, placing his fingers on the butt of a big six-shooter as he asked the question.

Well, if it will do you any good to know, I will tell you," was the calm rejoinder. "I am young Wild West."

"Young Wild West, hey? Well, you hain't crazy, are you?"

"Oh, no! I should hope not!" and the dashing young fellow laughed.

"You kin bet your boots he ain't crazy!" exclaimed a tall man, who was scarcely more than thirty, as he stepped up and faced the second badman.

Like the boy, he wore a buckskin hunting suit, and he had every appearance of being an all-around Western man.

His hair was black and hung down over his shoulders, and his drooping mustache of the same color was combed as neatly as though he had not been long out of a barber shop.

Behind him stood a boy of twenty, who was handsome and fearless in his looks, and who was rigged out the same as the tall man and the boy who had dared to cross the ruler of the camp.

These three had reached Magic Mark about half an hour before the arrival of the stagecoach that landed the tenderfoot in front of the Bed Rock tavern.

Hen Holt had talked to them about the place, and had given them to understand that it was a bad camp.

And now here they were, interfering with him because he was having some fun with a tenderfoot!

He could scarcely believe his senses, and not until the tall man spoke up did he find the use of his tongue.

"Great gimlets!" he blustered. "What do I hear, anyhow? Why, I'm ther ruler of Magic Mark! I'm a hurricane from Missouri, an' a hickory limb what's been bent! Stand clear until I make things hustle around here! Look out, you meddlesome monkeys, I'm goin' ter make things hum!"

He made a dive for the handsome boy who called himself Young Wild West, and the other badman grabbed for the tall man at his side.

Then something happened that made the men looking on hold their breath.

There was a struggle of perhaps a second or two, and then Hen Holt went headlong off the stoop, knocking two or three miners over like tenpins as he went.

He had scarcely landed on the ground when the other fellow landed on top of him.

"Whoopie!" cried the tall man, drawing a brace of six-shooters. "I reckon there ain't enough measly coyotes in Magic Mark to scare us! Whoopie! Let yourselves jingle!"

Young Wild West drew his revolvers, and so did the other boy.

They saw that the majority of the crowd were inclined to sympathize with the blustering badman, who was the ruler of the camp.

Dark looks were cast at the strangers as the two rascals struggled to their feet.

"Gentlemen!" cried Young Wild West, in a ringing voice, as they stepped down from the stoop, "you had better take it a little easy. The first man who attempts to fire a shot will go down. I mean what I say! I never miss when I fire!"

There was something in the tone of voice that caused the crowd to hesitate about drawing their shooters.

Some of them took their hand away from them altogether.

But Ben Holt was now on his feet again, not much the worse for his sudden fall.

He did not heed the warning, because he was too much enraged to even hear it.

"Look out of ther way, boys!" he yelled. "I'm goin' to riddle that long-haired boy with bullets. He's got to be planted into the little cemetery we started last spring. He—"

"Drop that revolver!"

The rascal was cut short in his blustering speech.

The dashing looking young fellow stood within six feet of him, and the muzzle of a nickel-plated revolver was staring him straight in the face.

The hand that held the weapon was as steady as a rock, too, and the glitter in the eyes of the boy told the rascal only too well that he meant just what he said.

"Drop your shooter, or I'll drop you, as sure as my name is Young Wild West!"

Thud!

The shooter slipped from the hand of the ruler of the camp and struck the ground with a sound that could be heard by all present.

The fellow who had shown such a willingness to side in with Holt was standing quite still in his tracks, his hand on his revolver.

But he had not drawn it, for the reason that the tall man had covered him as neatly as Young Wild West had the other.

"Gentlemen," said Young Wild West, flashing a sweeping glance at all hands, "don't think for a minute that we came here to run things. Far from it! But one thing I want to tell you is that this is a free country, and that one man has got as much right in it as another. No man has got the right to shoot at another without just cause, though, and I am one who will never stand by and see a person imposed on without interfering. If you don't like it because I took

the part of the tenderfoot just speak out. I'll guarantee that you'll find me on hand to convince you that I did right."

A faint cheer went up from some of the men on the stoop, and then the young man who had arrived in the stagecoach took off his hat.

Over half the crowd broke out then, and they made the air ring with their cries of approval.

But there was some there who were nothing like satisfied.

They were the intimate friends of Hen Holt.

One of them stepped forward.

"We've run ther camp to suit ourselves so far," he said, "an' I reckon we ain't goin' ter allow any outsiders to come in here and show us how ter run it."

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Young Wild West, smiling at the fellow as though it was all a good joke.

Just then Holt and his main partner in the rumpus made a simultaneous rush at the boy.

They took him a little by surprise, and succeeded in knocking the revolver from his hand.

But it did them little good.

Spat! Spat!

Young Wild West's right and left fists shot out as though propelled by a pile-driver, and down they went to the ground.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, who were the two partners of Young Wild West had been going to fire at the men, but when they saw how easily their young leader had knocked them down they refrained from doing so.

"Tell us what to do with 'em, Wild!" said the tall man, who was Cheyenne Charlie, the famous scout. "They need to be taught a lesson, I reckon!"

There was a tub that was full of water right under a pump near by that had been placed there for horses to drink from, and as Young Wild West caught sight of it he exclaimed:

"Duck them, boys!"

That was enough.

Charlie and Jim seized the blustering badman, and lifting him bodily, plunged him headforemost into the tub.

"That's it, boys!" cried Wild. "Now the other one!"

The tenderfoot jumped on a chair and let out a yell of delight.

Cracking and spluttering, Hen Holt was dropped in a heap, and then the two partners of Young Wild West grabbed the other fellow, who was in the act of sneaking away.

He got the same dose, fully two-thirds of the men in the crowd cheering as it happened.

CHAPTER II.

OUR FRIENDS ARE GIVEN TWO HOURS IN WHICH TO LEAVE THE CAMP.

Young Wild West and his two intimate friends and partners, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, had struck the mining camp called Magic Mark by accident.

It was shortly after an uprising among the Sioux Indians had been put down, and they had come up that way on some business for the government authorities.

They had settled their business and were on their way back by a shorter route when they came upon the camp.

Our hero's love for excitement and adventure and his desire to assist the weak and punish the guilty made him resolve to show them how to run the camp, after he found how things were there.

Hen Holt was altogether too much of a blustering bully to suit him, and as he had brought him down a few pegs, he decided to have him stay there until the bad element was either subdued or thinned out.

The ducking the two men had received did not tend to make them have any kindlier feeling toward the boy, but that made little difference to him.

From what he knew of the mining business he could readily imagine that Magic Mark was a place that was bound to go ahead if things were run properly.

If a few villainous badmen were allowed to have their way it would never amount to much, since they would keep away the better class of men.

When the ducking was over the two men sneaked off in a hurry, much to the surprise and satisfaction of the timid ones.

Young Wild West had scored a great hit, and not a man had been killed, either.

It hardly seemed possible to those who had been in fear of the hard crowd that had run things to suit themselves.

Wild knew he had the majority of the crowd with him.

He had never struck a place in his life that he did not make the better class of its inhabitants flock to him the minute he took a hand.

"Gentlemen," said he, as he brushed back his long chestnut hair and removed a dent from his sombrero, "I hope you have enjoyed the ducking just now. Probably it reminds you that you all need a little wetting up. I never drink anything strong myself, but I am not opposed to those who do, so long as they know how far to go. Step inside and have what you please, and I'll pay the bill."

That was the sort of talk that went at Magic Mark.

Yelling themselves hoarse, the miners flocked into the tavern.

Even some of the followers of the ruler of the camp came in.

The landlord had a very smiling face as he put out the drinks the men called for, and when Young Wild West tossed him a gold coin to pay the bill he bowed and thanked him.

"You're of the right sort," he said. "I've been in this business a long time, both in England, Australia an' here in ther West; but I never seen a man tame a crowd like you did, sir. You stay around here a while, an' we'll all find that things will be boomin'. Here's luck, sir."

"Go ahead, my friend. Drink hearty," retorted our hero.

At this juncture the tenderfoot stepped up to him.

"I want to thank you for interfering as you did," he said, warmly. "I am a perfect stranger in these parts, and not up to the way they do things. You certainly saved me from being killed outright, I think."

"Well, if I did that it is only what anyone ought to do. Are you going to locate here in Magic Mark?"

"Well, I was informed that it was a good place for a man who was willing to work to get ahead in the world. But I had no idea that I would get the reception I did."

"Well, you will soon get used to the way they do in the wild West, I fancy. To tell you the truth, you look like a young man who has got the grit necessary to succeed. What is your name, if I may ask?"

"Hudson Bell is my name."

"Well, I am glad to meet you. Myself and my two partners will likely remain here in Magic Mark a few days, and if there is anything we can do to get you on the right track we will be glad to do it."

"Thank you," and the young man put out his hand. "I am lucky to get off as easily as I did. About the only damage done was that the clothes I have in my valise have been pierced by a bullet. My! But didn't you take the starch out of those two men, though!"

"Well, the starch ought to come out of them, if there was any in them. There was enough water in that tub to do it, I think."

Some of the miners returned to their work after the excitement was over, but there were others who hung around with the expectation of seeing something further before the day was over.

Stagecoach days, which were Tuesdays and Saturdays, they generally left their work long enough to see who came in, and as there was generally more or less excitement on such occasions, some of them really longed for those particular days to come around.

Hudson Bell soon made arrangements to put up at the tavern for a day or two, or until he put up a shanty of his own, and then he followed Young Wild West and his partners into the room, where a meal had been prepared for them.

Our friends had ordered it shortly after their arrival, and it being later than the usual time dinners were served, they had been compelled to wait.

There was enough prepared to feed the tenderfoot arrival, too, so he sat at the same table with the dashing young hero who had championed his cause.

The proprietor, whose name, by the way, was Chapman, proved conclusively that he knew the sort of food a hungry man liked best, and the four guests gave ample proof that they fully appreciated it.

Our friends took their time at the meal, and when they had finished Young Wild West led the way out into the barroom and bought some of the best cigars the proprietor had for sale.

Then they went out to look at their horses, Hudson Bell accompanying them.

Wild had his splendid sorrel stallion Spitfire with him, and

Charlie and Jim were provided with the best mounts that could be purchased in the West.

"I think I will get me a good horse as soon as I have got far enough ahead in money matters," observed Bell. "Just at present I could hardly afford to buy a horse or anything else, for that matter. It took nearly all I had to pay my way out here to Montana."

"Where do you live when you're home?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"St. Paul, Minnesota," was the reply.

"St. Paul, eh? I was never that far east. It's a big town, I reckon."

"Oh, yes!"

"Anything like Denver?"

"Well, I can hardly say as to that. I never saw Denver, you know."

"Is that so? I always thought that almost everybody had been to Denver," and the scout looked rather surprised.

While they were talking a rough-looking man approached them.

He waited until he got within ten feet of them, and then said:

"Young Wild West, I've got a little message from Hen Holt to you."

"Is that so?" retorted Wild, looking at the fellow, coolly. "What is the message?"

"Well, Hen sent me here to tell you that you an' your pards has got jest two hours to git out of town."

"Is that a fact. Let me see," and the boy took his watch from his pocket. "It is now half past four. That means that by half past six we must be out of Magic Mark, I suppose."

"Yes, that's jest it," replied the man, nodding.

"Well, you go back and tell Mr. Hen Holt that we are not going to leave the camp until we are good and ready. Tell him that we certainly won't be ready to leave to-night."

"All right; but if I was you I'd do as he says."

"Well, you don't happen to be; so there is the hitch! Say!"

"Well, what do yer want, Young Wild West?"

"While you are at it you can inform Hen Holt that we are going to stay at Magic Mark for a few days and show them how to run the camp."

"I'll tell him if you say so."

"I say so. Now don't forget."

"You bet your boots I won't."

The man started off, and after making sure that their horses were stabled all right for the night, our friends started for the shanty tavern.

"There is going to be trouble," said Hudson Bell, showing how uneasy the stranger's words made him.

"I reckon so!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, with a chuckle.

"Have you got a shooter?" asked Wild, turning to the tenderfoot.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Do you know how to use it?"

"Well, I never yet tried to use it on a man."

"You can shoot pretty straight, I suppose?"

"Yes, at a mark."

"Well, you must imagine that one of these ruffians who attempt to drive you out of the camp are targets, then. It is the only way to get along successfully in a place of this kind."

"I will try and do as you say," was the rather hesitating reply.

"Well, you just watch us, and if you do the same as we do you won't get hurt, I think."

"All right."

When they got inside they found quite a number of miners there.

The majority of them were those who sided with the ruler of the camp. Our friends could tell that by the way they acted.

But our hero paid little attention to them.

"Come, Bell," he said to the tenderfoot. "We'll go out and see if we can't hunt up a place for you to stake a claim. You might as well get at it right away to-morrow. The longer you wait to go to work the less money you will have."

"That's right enough advice," spoke up Chapman, the landlord, who overheard the remark.

Wild led the way outside, and when they got into the middle of the sandy street he stopped and took a survey of things in general.

As has been stated, Magic Mark was not much of a place. There was plenty of room for newcomers.

While the four were standing there looking around a bearded miner came up.

"Lookin' for a place to locate?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Wild, sizing him up and coming to the quick conclusion that he was all right. "This young man wants to stake out a claim."

"There's one right next to mine," the miner hastened to say. "I'd like to git some good feller alongside of me."

"Suppose we take a look at it, boys?" asked our hero.

Of course, they were willing.

Bell was leaving it all to Young Wild West, for from what he had seen of him since the short time he had known him, he felt that he could not have a better adviser.

The miner who had been kind enough to give them a pointer said that his name was Higgins, and that he had been there since the camp was christened Magic Mark.

"How did it come by that name, anyhow?" questioned Jim Dart.

"Well, I kin tell you in a few words," replied the miner. "Right where ther Bed Rock tavern stands there was a big rock, an' on that rock a smart feller, what died with his boots on a little later, made a mark with some kind of phosphorus stuff which only showed in ther night-time. In ther day it couldn't be seen, so ther superstitious ones—me among 'em—called it a magic mark. Ther camp was named that right away, then, an' when it was found how ther feller had fooled us all Hen Holt up an' shot him. That's how this place is called Magic Mark."

"Well, I reckon it's a good enough name, anyhow," said Cheyenne Charlie.

The distance to the claim of Higgins was not more than a couple of hundred yards from the tavern, and when they got there Wild quickly saw that he was a very industrious man.

He had erected a small shanty on the land, and had things in very good shape around it.

After a look around our hero decided that Bell could not better himself than to take the next claim, so he advised him to do so.

Higgins lent them a tape measure, and it was soon staked out.

"Now, then, young man," said the miner, "if you want to, you kin bunk in with me till you git on yer feet. It won't pay you ter board at ther tavern very long. Ther rates are too high."

"Thank you; I will accept your offer, if Young Wild West thinks I had better."

"Certainly, you had better," spoke up Wild. "I am glad that you have found a friend here in Magic Mark. I have reason to believe that you won't be long in paying Mr. Higgins back for his kindness."

Our friends were up at the claim for the best part of an hour, and just as they were thinking of going back they saw a body of men approaching.

There were easily fifteen of them, and they quickly saw that the two men who had received the ducking in the horse tub that afternoon were there.

"Now, then, boys," said Young Wild West, "look out for trouble. Those fellows mean business, by the looks of them."

Wild, Jim and Charlie had brought their rifles with them when they came from the tavern, and they at once swung them around, ready to use them.

CHAPTER III.

THE BADMEN GET TOGETHER.

The men came right on, though they certainly must have observed that Young Wild West and his partners were getting ready to fight.

The man who had carried the message to our hero had returned to Hen Holt and delivered the answer just as it was given to him.

Then the badmen had decided to organize themselves into a party and either force them from the camp or shoot them down.

The ruler of the camp, of course, preferred the latter way, since he felt very bitter against them for the ducking he had received.

Holt had impressed it upon the minds of his men to keep cool when they faced the "meddlers," as they chose to call our friends.

"We'll make out that we want to talk it over with 'em, an' then, while they ain't thinkin' about it, we'll open up our

game," he said, as they started out, after learning the direction Young Wild West and his three companions had taken.

So they walked on down, their revolvers loose in their belts, ready to deal out the leaden messengers of death at the proper time.

When they got within perhaps thirty feet of our friends they came to a halt.

"We've come down to talk things over with you, Young Wild West," said Hen Holt, keeping his hand on the butt of his shooter as he spoke.

"All right," replied Wild, taking a step nearer to them. "I would advise you to keep your hand off that revolver while you are talking, then."

"We've come down here to tell you that you'd better change your mind about showin' us how to run this camp," went on the villain, just as though he did not hear the remark.

"Take your hand away from that shooter!"

The commands was given in a ringing voice that was full of meaning.

Holt turned a trifle pale, for he saw that Young Wild West had whipped out a revolver and had him covered.

His hand slid from the weapon instantly.

The dozen or more companions of the ruler of the camp looked at each other questioningly.

Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart had drawn their shooters also.

"Go on an' talk, you measly coyote," said the scout, a grim smile playing about his mouth. "We're ready to listen to what you've got to say. Fire ahead, an' let's know jest what you want."

"We want you to either quit Magic Mark or else not interfere with us any more," spoke up the man who had received the second ducking.

"Don't you think you're asking a little too much?" spoke up Jim. "We would not have interfered with you, anyhow, if you had acted like decent men."

"Never mind telling them that, Jim," said Wild, coolly. "Hen Holt, I am of the opinion that you came down here for the purpose of cleaning us out. If that is the case, go ahead and do it; otherwise, turn about and light out!"

One of the villains made a move as though he was going to turn around, but instead of doing so he quickly fired a shot.

The bullet flew a foot or more over our hero's head, showing that the man's aim was very bad.

Crack!

Another report rang out, but it was Young Wild West who had fired this time.

He felt that it had to be done, so he dropped the villain in his tracks.

It was wonderful to see the effect this had upon the rest of the badmen.

Instead of starting to empty their revolvers, they turned, to a man, and started to walk away.

So much for our hero's coolness.

If he had got the least bit excited it might have been entirely different.

It was the nerve that counted.

The badmen were not used to bucking up against such men as he.

"Well, I never saw anything like that," declared Hudson Bell, as he gave a sigh of relief.

"Me, either," spoke up Higgins, the miner. "I reckon they changed their tune mighty quick."

"Yes, but it ain't over yet," observed Cheyenne Charlie.

"You kin jest bet that they'll be after us again."

"Well, I don't care when they come, so long as I see them when they are coming," retorted Wild. "Well, Bell, I guess it will be safer for you to put up at the tavern until after this blows over. It won't take over a day or two to settle it, I imagine. Now that I have given them my word to show them how to run the town, I mean to do it."

"An' you'll have ther thanks of every honest man in ther camp if you git ther best of 'em," said Higgins.

"Well, I'm glad to hear you talk that way," retorted Wild. "I never interfere with anyone unless I consider it my duty to do so. Are you going back with us, Mr. Higgins?"

"Yes, I think I will. I will have a talk with some of the best men in the camp, and we will probably settle upon something by which you can have our help to put down Hen Holt an' his gang."

"I should like to have the sanction of the better element, Mr. Higgins. They need not commit themselves if they don't want to. The fact that they are with us will be sufficient for us to know."

"All right."

The five started back for the main part of the mining camp.

Wild noticed that the badmen went right on past the tavern, and halted at a good-sized shanty about a hundred yards to the other side of it.

"That's ther headquarters of Hen Holt," said Higgins. "He lives there, an' I s'pose he's called ther gang in to talk over things."

"Well, let them talk," was the reply. "So long as they do not try to act they will be all right. I suppose they will go down pretty soon and take care of the fellow I dropped. I hated to do that, but I knew that it was the only way."

"It makes one less of ther measly coyotes to deal with, anyhow," remarked the scout.

When they got to the tavern Chapman, the landlord, nodded approvingly.

"We know all about it," he said. "I hope you fellers stay here a while."

Young Wild West and his partners and Hudson Bell had a late supper that night, as their dinner hour had been past the middle of the afternoon.

They heard nothing from the badmen and passed a comfortable night in the fairly decent accommodations the tavern afforded.

The next morning they learned from the landlord that the boss of the camp had been busy during the night getting a gang together for the purpose of starting a riot in the camp.

Wild thought that there would be a lively time before night, but he was mistaken.

For some reason or other, the villains did not choose to make a move that day.

The next day Hudson Bell began work on his claim, and in order to protect him from the badmen Wild and his partners gave up staying at the tavern and pitched their camp adjoining the shanty of Higgins, the miner.

Our hero had taken a strong notion to the tenderfoot, and he wanted to see him get ahead, so both he and Charlie and Jim did all they could to get him started right.

Before day was over Bell was delighted at the finding of a nugget that was worth at least thirty dollars.

This was a good starter, and when he got an estimate of its value from Wild he started in with a vigor that was almost unsurpassed.

After supper, and when it was yet daylight, our friends took a walk over to the supply store that was located near the Bed Rock tavern.

They needed a few things to add to their stores.

They left Hudson Bell in the shanty with Higgins, and they promised to keep their eyes on the horses for them.

"Well, boys," said our hero, as they walked along, "it is past six o'clock. That makes us twenty-four hours overtime in getting away from Magic Rock."

Cheyenne Charlie laughed.

"I reckon if we go away from here afore we git ready it will be ther first time anything like that ever happened."

"That's right, Charlie," declared Jim. "It will take more than this gang to drive us away."

When they got to the supply store they found a number of men gathered in front of it, and a few were inside.

Some of them greeted our three friends pleasantly, while others cast frowning looks upon them.

The latter were the ones who needed watching.

Jim went in to buy what they wanted, and Wild and Charlie remained on the stoop.

"I hear as how Bill Baggs got shot, jest fur doin' nothin' at all," remarked one of the rough-looking men, addressing another.

"Well, ther feller what done it oughter git ther same dose, an' I don't see why it was that he didn't," retorted the one the remark was addressed to.

"My friend," spoke up Young Wild West, "you were there when the shooting occurred?"

"No, I wasn't," was the reply.

"And yet you say Bill Baggs got shot just for nothing at all."

"Well, that is what we heard."

"Well, I happen to know that he was shot because he deserved to be. I was there to see."

There was a silence of perhaps half a minute, and then the first speaker exclaimed:

"We've only got your word for that, Young Wild West."

"Well, if my word is not satisfactory you can have any other proof that you want. What do you want, anyhow? Are you looking for trouble with me?"

"No."

"Then please shut up."

"I guess a man kin talk when he feels like it."

"Oh, yes! But you want to look out what you talk about. Sometimes a fellow says things that are apt to cause trouble for him. You made a remark a little while ago that the man got shot just for nothing. If you call his trying to take my life nothing, why that is all right. But that is why he was dropped, my friend. Do you want any further explanation?"

"You're a putty quick shot, an' a good one, too, I guess," said the fellow. "Mebbe you wouldn't be so good if you got in a muss with a man an' used your hands an' feet."

"You mean a regular rough-and-tumble fight, I suppose?"

"Yes, that's jest what I mean."

"Well, just step out there where we will have plenty of room. Charlie, you please shoot the first man that interferes!"

As our hero said this he stepped down off the stoop.

"All right," answered Charlie. "You kin bet that I'll take care of anyone that interferes."

The big, rough-looking miner seemed a trifle surprised when Wild showed such a willingness to fight him.

But he did not back down any.

He got down off the stoop in a hurry and rushed at the daring young deadshot.

He came with lowered head and outstretched arms, as thought he meant to wipe up the ground with him in short order.

Whack!

He received a blow under his chin that caused his head to fly up, and back he staggered in an effort to keep his feet.

"Foller him up, Wild, an' make him sick!" called out Charlie.

Our hero did not need this advice.

He knew just what he was doing.

He darted forward and struck the man a hot right and left, and down he went.

"Do you know how to fight?" he coolly asked, as he stood over the fallen rascal.

He made no reply, but rolled over and made a grab for our hero's legs.

But he did not reach them.

As quick as a flash Wild was behind him, and, seizing him by the collar, lifted him to his feet.

The instant he was bearing his weight on his heels he twisted him around and hit him a short-arm blow in the ribs, and let go of him.

Down went the fellow, completely done for.

"I've got enough!" he blurted out. "Don't hit me agin."

"That shows how sensible you are," retorted the dashing boy. "You are wise in not drawing a knife or shooter, I can tell you. Now, then, if there is anyone else here who has got the opinion that he can down me—in any way at all—let him say so, and we will settle it right now."

A cheer went up from the majority of the men, and the bad ones said nothing.

Jim Dart, who had come out of the store with the rest, now went in and got his purchases.

"I guess we had better stop in the tavern and see how things are there, boys," said Wild, in a calm and easy way. "These fellows are through with us, I think."

CHAPTER IV.

WILD IS CAUGHT BY THE BAD GANG.

There was quite a noisy gathering at the tavern when Young Wild West and his partners walked in.

But, strange to say, none of Hen Holt's gang were there.

The miners felt so good over what had happened that they were celebrating.

Hitherto they would hardly have dared to express themselves as they were doing, as no man wants to run the risk of being shot down by a sneaking thug such as Holt undoubtedly was.

For the sake of remaining in peaceful possession of their claims they had allowed the villain to go ahead and run the camp.

But now it was different.

A young champion of their rights and privileges in the person of Young Wild West had come to Magic Mark, and

he had given his word to the bad element that he would show them how to run the camp.

Cheers went up when the three appeared before the men. "Everythin' is runnin' along smooth now," said one. "But I'm of ther opinion that it's ther calm what always comes before ther storm breaks. Hen Holt ain't goin' ter give in as easy as all this, an' ther meetin's he's holdin' with his gang ain't all fur nothin'."

"Well, when they get ready to show their hand they will find us ready," said Wild.

They did not stay long in the place, but before they went out our hero advised the men to be careful, and if the bad gang undertook to clean them out to stand their ground until he got where the trouble was.

They went back to the shanty of Higgins, and when they started to the door they found it open and the place in darkness.

This was a little surprising to them, since they had hardly expected that anyone would bother the place that night.

But that was where they had been mistaken.

Ben Holt had found right at the start that he had tackled someone that he could not handle in a face-to-face game.

"There's something wrong, I reckon," said Cheyenne Charlie, as he lighted a match.

"I should say there was," retorted Wild, and then he led the way into the shanty.

Almost the first object he saw was the body of Higgins lying on the floor.

Jim quickly grabbed a lantern that was on a stool and lighted it.

As the light illumined the interior of the shanty a noise was heard over in a corner.

Wild quickly darted to the spot, and was just in time to see Hudson Bell arising to his feet.

The young man was bleeding from a wound in the side of his head, and appeared to be somewhat dazed.

"What is the matter, Bell?" asked our hero, taking hold of him and leading him to a bench.

"Some men came here and attacked us. They broke open the door without the least warning, and then they fired three or four shots. Mr. Higgins fell, and then I knew nothing more until just now when I heard you moving about and the light flashed in my eyes."

That was all the explanation the tenderfoot could give of what had taken place.

Wild made an examination of the wound in his head, and found that it had been caused by a glance shot from a revolver.

Though it was not a serious wound, it had been quite enough to render Bell insensible.

"Did you recognize any of the men?" asked Jim, who had bent over Higgins and found that he was dead.

"Yes, two of them were the men you ducked in the horse tub yesterday."

"Ah, I thought so!" exclaimed our hero. "Well, they have murdered poor Higgins, and they came near fixing you. I suppose they thought they had killed you when they saw you drop. This means that Hen Holt must be put down as soon as possible. A rope is waiting to hang him, if a bullet does not take him off first. This is too bad. Higgins was what I called a fine man."

Bell could not tell how long it had been since he was shot, but he did know that Wild and his two partners had been gone more than fifteen minutes when the attack was made.

"What's goin' ter be done about it, Wild?" Cheyenne Charlie asked.

"We will go right over to the tavern and let those in there know what has happened. Then we will try and find the gang that did this," was the reply.

"We had better take our horses. It may be a long chase, you know," spoke up Jim.

"Yes, we will take the horses. Bell can ride over with me to the tavern."

As soon as Bell's wound was dressed they went out to get the horses.

But when they reached the barn they found that they were not there.

"Jumpin' catamounts!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie. "Ther measly coyotes has stole our horses!"

"That is just what has happened," said our hero, coolly.

"Now we have got a double duty to perform. I'll have Spit-fire back, if every man in Magic Mark is against me!"

The blood of Young Wild West was now up.

He meant business, but he was keeping his head, for all that.

Never once did he lose his wonderful coolness and judgment.

"Come on!" he said. "We must find where the scoundrels went first of all."

He led the way out of the shanty, the lighted lantern in one hand, and a revolver in the other.

There was a possibility that the bad gang might be somewhere in the near vicinity, but he was hardly of that opinion. He knew they were a cowardly set, for the most part.

Wild began looking around for the hoofprints of the horses. He was not long in finding them, since the ground was soft, having been recently dug up.

There were many marks on the ground, some of them very deep, which showed that the villains had had quite a time of it to get the animals to go with them.

The sorrel stallion of our hero was one that could not be led very easily by anyone save his master.

But if a man got on his back he could be urged to go.

The practiced eye of the Young Prince of the Saddle soon showed him that someone had mounted the sorrel.

The hoofprints led off to the left of the mining camp, and as it was a new trail, it was quite easy to follow, since they had the lantern to light the way for them.

"I hardly think they have gone very far," said Wild in a low tone. "They don't mean to leave Magic Mark, you can bet on that! They have taken the horses somewhere to hide them. If we hurry a little we may catch them before they get away."

They kept on until the trail led them to the mouth of a rather narrow pass.

Then Wild extinguished the lantern.

"We must go through here in the dark," he said. "If they are ahead of us they might see the light, and that would cause us to make a good target for them."

"Well, I reckon this is ther only way they could have took ther horses," retorted Cheyenne Charlie. "We don't need a light to follow ther trail through here."

The pass was about a quarter of a mile in length, and when they came to the end of it a few minutes later they found it came out upon the narrow ledge that ran along the face of the cliff.

Young Wild West felt that they were near the end of the trail.

"You fellows stay right here, and I will go ahead and take a look around," he said, in a whisper.

He worked his way along the ledge with the greatest of stealth and caution.

That the horses had gone there he was well satisfied.

The ledge ran pretty straight for about fifty feet, and then it turned sharply to the right.

When Wild reached the angle he came to a pause.

He was not going around until he first made an investigation.

It might be that there was someone there waiting for him.

He dropped flat upon his stomach and proceeded along very slowly until he could peer around the angle.

Young Wild West was seldom caught by a trick of any sort, but this time he had crept right into a trap.

The very instant he thrust his head around the rock a noose dropped over his head, and he was pulled forward.

The rope about his neck choked him so that he could not utter a warning cry to his companions, and before he hardly realized it three men fell upon him and quickly rendered him powerless to act.

Wild was a very powerful young fellow, but in the hands of those three men he was as nothing.

One of them could not have possibly succeeded in besting him, even if he had been taken unawares, but when it came to three there was no use in his struggling.

A gag was thrust in his mouth, and his hands were bound behind him in short order.

All during this little noise was made by his captors.

They worked with great stealth.

They picked up our hero bodily and carried him softly over a stretch of smooth rock and entered a cave.

As they did so he saw another man crouching near the angle in the face of the bluff, as though on the watch for someone else to appear.

Wild realized that they were far more shrewd than he had given them the credit for being.

But he did not think of giving up.

That was something he never did until he felt certain that it was all over with him.

A few times in his life he had been in situations where it looked as though there was no hope for him.

But in this case there was a chance of many things happening to save his life.

After everything else was gone Young Wild West relied on chance.

And he never lost confidence.

It is a great way to be, but there are few who can be that way.

It was quite a good-sized cave that the boy was carried in, and when he reached it he saw that a lighted lantern rested on a spur of rock in the rear.

By the aid of the light this threw around he saw the horses in the cave.

There were perhaps half a dozen of them, but he knew that Spitfire and those of Charlie and Jim must be among them.

There were but five men in the cave, all told, so the one on guard outside made it half a dozen.

Wild was deposited in a sitting posture on the ground, his back against a big stone that was almost square.

Then a lariat was brought into play, and he was bound to the stone, several turns being taken around it.

"There!" exclaimed the voice of Hen Holt. "I reckon we've got Young Wild West hard an' fast. There's only one thing about it, boys! We've got to hold him until we git everything our way in Magic Mark agin, an' then we'll make a public example of him by hangin' him. That will sorter make ther rest of 'em realize ther mistake it is ter buck agin' ther ruler of Magic Mark, who is a hurricane from Missouri, what chews glass when he gits mad."

A murmur of approval went up at this.

That the villain had the men fully under his control was quite plain.

When Wild heard his words a feeling of deep satisfaction came over him.

He was safe for the present.

That was a whole lot.

"How about ther two fellers what was with Young Wild West?" asked one of the men.

"I reckon they ain't so very far away," retorted Holt. "But it are more than likely that Young Wild West came on alone to take a look around. They don't know where he is, an' even if they did, how are 'they goin' ter git here? Ther minute one of 'em comes aroun' ther corner out there he'll git his medicine. Chris has his orders ter drop ther first one that shows his nose, an' I reckon he'll do it, too."

"Oh, you kin bet Chris will do it!" exclaimed one of the men. "He jest likes that kind of business about as well as anyone I ever seen."

Wild listened to this talk with anything but a pleasant feeling.

He knew that it was possible that Charlie and Jim would come to look for him, and as the ledge was so narrow at the place where the angle was they would stand little show of getting around it if the scoundrel stationed there opened fire on them.

Hen Holt and his gang semed to be in high glee, and not in the least hurry about leaving the cave.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed.

Wild knew that it was pretty near time that his partner would appear in search of him.

He began to grow just a trifle nervous.

But soon half an hour had slipped by.

One minute later a revolver shot sounded.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROBBERY ON THE MOUNTAINSIDE.

About an hour before sunset on the same day that Young Wild West and his friends left Hudson Bell and the miner in the shanty while they went to the supply store, a party of six were riding along the trail over the mountains at a distance of perhaps twenty miles from the mining camp of Magic Mark.

In this party were two females, one of about forty, and the other less than half that age.

Both were handsome ladies, and an ordinary observer might have readily guessed that they were mother and daughter.

There was a certain air of refinement about them that looked rather out of place in that wild section of the country, though they were dressed in riding habits of buckskin and corduroy and were quite at their ease in the saddle.

One of them was a big, hardy looking fellow attired in a

suit of clothes that was more adapted to business than roughing it on the mountains and plains.

The remaining three of the party were plainly men of the type known as badmen in the West, and their rough costumes and scarred and weather-beaten faces made them look rather out of place with the gentleman and the two ladies.

The big, hardy-looking man in the business suit bore the name of Edward Griffith, and the ladies were his wife and daughter.

Griffith had been a very successful miner into a town called Pan Out until two days before we meet him.

There had been some trouble with the men who worked for him, and a riot had started, which ended in the town being burned to ashes.

Griffith had fled with his wife and daughter, after hiring three men to pilot them to some civilized place.

He had lost almost everything he had, save the ore that was in his mines, but he thought more of the safety of his loved ones than anything else just then.

Though he was not aware of it, he had engaged three of the worse men he could possibly have struck.

They knew he had some money, and they had readily agreed to take the three to a place of safety, intending to rob them before they got to any particular place.

It so happened that they did not know that there was such a camp as Magic Mark in existence, and as we find them they were riding directly toward it unconsciously.

The three men, who had planned to rob the man who was paying so well to be taken to a place of safety bore the appellations of Riggs, Jackson and Timber.

They were miners, but would much rather steal than work.

As they came to a halt and looked at the rapidly declining sun an anxious expression crossed the face of Edward Griffith.

"It looks as though we will have to camp out again to-night," he said to the men.

"Yes," replied one of them. "We was in hopes of strikin' ther town afore night, but we must have calculated wrong."

"Well, let us proceed until darkness sets in, anyhow. There is no telling but what we might strike the town after all."

"All right, boss!" retorted the man called Riggs, who was plainly the leading spirit of the trio.

"Oh!" exclaimed the young lady. "Papa, don't you think we will find a place where there is a hotel to-night? I feel that I cannot possibly sleep out in the open air again."

"The men are doing their level best, Mollie," was the reply. "Just think how much better off we are here than we would have been if we had stayed at Pan Out! We would have been torn to pieces and burned by the infuriated miners if we had not left just as we did."

"Mollie, your father knows what is best," spoke up the mother, though her voice trembled slightly, showing that she did not like the idea of remaining away from shelter again that night.

"Of course, mother," said the girl. "But it seems rather hard on us, does it not? Papa was not to blame for the riot starting, I am sure."

"Of course, he was not to blame. But since it did start, he took the only course available. We must make the best of it, Mollie."

"All right, mother. I shan't find another bit of fault."

The girl, who was very pretty, smiled, as though to doubly assure her mother.

As they rode along the three rascals went ahead, and Griffith could not help noticing that they were doing considerable whispering.

He had a faint idea that something was wrong, but attributed their actions to the fact that they had lost their way.

He did not intend to find fault with them, if such was the case, but he could not help showing his disappointment.

Finally he rode up close to them, and said:

"What's the matter, men? You haven't lost your way, have you?"

"That's jest what we have, boss!" exclaimed Riggs. "We have clean lost our way, an' we've come to ther conclusion that we'll leave you people to look out for yourselves, while we go off on our own hook."

"What!" exclaimed the mine owner, turning pale. "You surely don't mean that!"

"I reckon we mean it, all right," spoke up one of the others. "Ther fact is that we've got tired of you people. So you kin jest hand over all ther money an' valuables you've got, an' then we'll go on about our business."

Griffith looked aghast, while startled screams came from his wife and daughter.

"You surely are not going to rob me!" the surprised man gasped.

"Oh, what's ther use of talkin' any more about it?" cried Riggs. "Fork over what you've got, an' be in a hurry about it. If you don't you'll git a few bullet holes in yer! Hurry up, now!"

The villain whipped out a revolver and held it close under the mine owner's nose.

Mrs. Griffith fainted then, and her daughter quickly dismounted and was in time to catch her as she was falling to the ground.

For the first time the mine owner realized what the intentions of the three villains were.

"You have planned this out," he said, in a husky voice. "Well, you have the upper hand. Take what I've got, but don't shoot me!"

"That's what I call real sensible talk," retorted Riggs, laughing. "Now, then, jest hand over your money and your gold watch and chain, and what other jewelry you've got."

Griffith did so, giving them everything he had.

"Now, ther earrings an' rings an' other things ther wimmen have got—we want them, too. We ain't doin' no half-way business. It's whole hog or none."

There was no help for it.

The three scoundrels had drawn their revolvers, and they certainly acted as though they would use them at the slightest provocation.

"Give them your jewelry, Mollie," said Griffith. "There is no help for it. They have deceived us, and we must make the best of it. We may find a friend who will help me out until I get on my feet again."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Riggs. "I reckon you're likely to find a whole lot of friends in this part of the country. Why, it ain't likely that there's anyone in fifty miles of us."

He stepped over, and soon possessed himself of all the valuables the mother and daughter owned.

"Now, then," he said, shaking his shooter under the nose of the mine owner, "we're goin' about our business, an' if you try ter foller us you'll git shot. Do yer understand?"

"We won't follow you!" exclaimed Griffith.

"Well, jest see that you don't."

Leaving their victims there on the lonely mountain trail, the three rode off at a quick pace.

They kept on until darkness set in, and then in some manner they lost the trail.

"What are you goin' ter do, Riggs?" asked the fellow named Jackson.

"Oh, we'll ride on until we find a good place to camp," was the retort.

They did ride on, and at length they struck the narrow defile that Young Wild West and his partners had followed the horse thieves and murderers through.

If they had kept on to the right they would have run right into Magic Mark.

"I wonder where this will fetch us out to?" remarked Timber, who seldom did much talking.

"Some good place to camp, you kin bet your boots!" answered Riggs.

"Yes, that's what I think," spoke up Jackson. "Well, I'm sorter tired, an' a little rest an' somethin' ter eat won't hurt me a bit."

"We've got all ther game what we shot, anyhow," said the leader of the trio. "I calculate that Griffith an' his wife an' darter will sorter go ter sleep hungry ter-night. Boys, we must have made about ten thousand dollars in that haul."

"I reckon it will amount to all of that," retorted Jackson. "Ther jewelry ther wimmen folks wore is of ther expensive kind, most likely."

"I s'pose we'll divide it as soon as we git a fire kindled an' have had supper," Timber ventured.

"Sartin!" exclaimed Riggs. "We'll divide up, share an' share alike."

Just as he said this they reached the end of the narrow pass and came to the ledge.

The three villains came to a halt and dismounted.

The leader lighted a match and took a look ahead of them.

It so happened that he chanced to see the print of horses' hoofs in the ground as he did so.

"There's someone been ridin' along here not long ago," he whispered.

"Is that so?" asked Jackson.

"Yes, I kin see ther hoofprints."

"Well, what are we goin' ter do?"

"Go right ahead, of course. If someone else could go this way we kin."

"That's so."

"If we run across 'em I reckon we kin make ourselves agreeable to them, no matter what sort they are."

"I reckon so," nodded Timber.

"We'd better lead our horses along this here ledge, though."

"All right."

He started ahead, and had covered about ten feet, when the forms of three men loomed up in front of them.

"Halt! Throw up your hands, or you'll drop!" exclaimed a voice in a low tone that was full of meaning.

Then the three villains obeyed the command, proving that they were the rankest kind of cowards after all.

"So you had good luck at robbin' Griffith an' his wife an' daughter, did you, you measly coyotes?" went on the man who had halted them. "Now if any one of you jest makes ther least kind of noise it will be ther last thing you do on earth!"

It was Cheyenne Charlie who was talking.

With him were Jim Dart and Hudson Bell, who had remained there on the ledge, waiting for Young Wild West to come back from his tour of investigation.

They had heard the three horsemen coming, and by paying strict attention they had been able to hear all they said.

Then they had planned to make prisoners of them, thinking that they belonged to Hen Holt's gang of badmen.

It was an easy thing to hold up the villains, and Cheyenne Charlie did it to perfection.

"Jim, you an' Bell take their shooters from 'em an' tie their hands behind 'em. I'll keep 'em covered."

Jim stepped forward, followed by the tenderfoot.

"Get down!" he said to Riggs.

The villain obeyed.

Our friends were always provided with stout cords, and the leader of the trio was soon fixed so he could do no harm.

Timber came next, and he submitted without a murmur.

"Now comes your turn!" exclaimed Dart, looking at Jackson. "Down off that horse, now."

The man obeyed quickly enough.

But the moment his feet landed on the ground he darted away like a shot.

Straight along the ledge he ran, and reaching the sharp turn, made a move to get around it.

But at that very instant a revolver cracked, and falling back, he slipped and fell headlong over the precipice.

"Aha!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, as he realized what had happened. "That wasn't Wild that done that. Ther rest of the gang are here, an' they must have shot that feller through mistake. Come on, Jim! We must see about this!"

He led the way to the angle and then came to a pause.

The scout was altogether too experienced to make a headlong rush around the corner.

Someone was on the other side waiting to shoot.

Different tactics would have to be pursued.

A sudden thought struck him.

Changing his voice, he exclaimed:

"You've went an' shot one of our own gang, you fools! Here he was bringin' ther two prisoners to yer. an' you had ter go an' shoot!"

"Is that so?" came a voice from around the corner. "Well, that's too bad!"

CHAPTER VI.

GOOD LUCK ALL AROUND.

When the revolver shot sounded Young Wild West surely thought that either Jim Dart or Cheyenne Charlie had caused it.

It might have been that either of them had fired it, or it was possible that one of the two had been the target.

Anyhow, he could not help thinking that they had been responsible for the shot being fired.

The men rushed from the cave in a hurry, and he was left alone.

Then he did something that he had not tried to do before.

He struggled to free himself from his bonds.

Much to his surprise and joy, he found that he could stretch the bond that held his hands together quite easily.

This knowledge made him act all the more quickly.

He gave two mighty tugs and his hands were free.

The cords that held him were of some texture that would

stretch, and just the least bit of a stretch made an awful difference in the case of Young Wild West.

His wrists were large, anyway, and when he found the bonds yielded it was no great thing for him to free himself. And with his hands free it did not take him long to get at the knot of the lariat that held him to the rock.

The knot was in front of him, anyhow, and that gave him all the more show.

Wild worked fast.

He knew the villains were liable to come back at any time, and that only stimulated him to keep at it.

He was used to knots, anyway, and he soon had this one untied.

The rest was quite easy, and in less than two minutes from the time the villains rushed out of the cave he was standing on the ground free of the ropes that bound him.

His belt containing his revolvers and knife were right near him.

He had seen Holt toss it on the ground, and as they had not taken the lantern from the cave, it was easy enough for him to find the articles.

Wild grabbed up the belt and buckled it around him.

Then, with a shooter in his hand, he felt like a different being entirely.

"Now, Spitfire, old fellow!" he muttered. "I guess you will get away, too."

He stepped over to the horse just as he heard one of the men coming back into the cave.

Knowing that the villain would be sure to see that he was not tied to the stone any longer, he changed his course and stepped forward to meet him.

The quicker they got together the better it would be.

The fellow, who happened to be Hen Holt's right bower, the man who had received the ducking with him, ran right into Wild.

One quick blow from the butt of our hero's revolver, and he fell senseless to the ground.

Acting on a quick thought, Wild seized him and dragged him to the big stone.

Then he placed the unconscious man in a sitting posture and bound him to it.

Though he worked quickly, he drew the lariat tight and knotted it hard.

"There you are!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "I guess I am very much in the game yet."

He could hear voices outside, as though a parley was going on, but he did not try to listen just then.

He went over to the horses, and picking out his own faithful steed, quickly untied him.

The sorrel gave a whinny of delight as he recognized his young master, and he received an affectionate pat on the neck in reply.

Then Young Wild West quickly liberated the horses of Jim and Charlie.

Pulling the bridles over their heads, so he could catch them the moment he desired, he faced them to the entrance of the cave and made them stand still.

Then he went out to see what the trouble was over near the corner of the cliff.

At that very moment he heard the voice of Hen Holt say: "You can't fool me, you galoots! I reckon Chris shot ther right man, all right. If you want any of it, come on an' show yourself."

Wild now led Jim's horse out and gave him a slap on the flank, knowing that the animal would strike out the way he had come.

He was not mistaken, for the horse immediately started on a sharp trot straight for the ledge.

The men got out of the way in a hurry, not knowing what it meant.

Then our hero turned Cheyenne Charlie's horse loose.

It promptly started after the other.

It came Spitfire's turn next.

"Careful, old boy!" whispered Wild, as the animal started off. "Don't fall when you go around the corner!"

But the horses were not apt to fall.

They could see a great deal better than he could in the darkness.

Two of the men came running for the cave to see what was the matter.

They saw our hero.

"What's ther matter with ther hosses?" one of them asked, probably thinking he was the man who had come back into the cave.

"I let them loose," was the quick reply.

"Let them loose? What for?" demanded the fellow, not recognizing the boy's voice at first.

"Because I wanted to! Now look out for yourselves! Up with your hands, or down you go!"

Instead of obeying the men made a dash for him.

Crack! Crack!

Young Wild West kept his word.

It was a case of having to do it to save his own life.

Both men dropped just as Spitfire trotted around the corner of the ledge behind the other two horses.

"All right, boys!" shouted Wild. "Look out for me! I'm coming around!"

He was at the corner by the time the last words left his lips, and the rest of the bad gang, being stupefied by what had happened, did not offer to stop him.

Wild got around all right, and then he found his partners and Hudson Bell there, each with a drawn revolver.

"Whoopee!" cried Cheyenne Charlie, waving his hat. "Hooray for Young Wild West, boys!"

He let out a yell that awoke the echoes, and Jim and Bell joined him.

"Take it easy!" observed our hero. "They may take it in their heads to come around."

"How many of 'em is there?" queried the scout.

"Four now. There was just half a dozen of them. I was compelled to drop two to save myself."

"Well, they must have been pretty smart to nip you the way they did."

"To tell the truth, it was a smart trick on their part. I ran right into the trap. But I got out of it all right, so there's one consolation."

"Yes, a big consolation," spoke up Jim. "I hardly think we could have got to you to help you."

"Not by way of the ledge, anyhow. They had things all their own way there, and they were going to shoot you as fast as you showed up."

"An' they shot one of their own gang by mistake," said Charlie, looking at the other two prisoners.

"How did you come to nip those fellows?" Wild asked.

"Easy. They rode up to us, and they held up their hands when I told them to. We heard them comin', an' they was talkin' about how they had robbed a mine owner an' his wife and darter, which they had left somewhere on the trail. When we heard that we thought we'd better tend to their case."

"That was right."

"One of them ran away when he dismounted, and he got killed for his pains," spoke up Jim.

"Well, that is no fault of yours."

"Oh, no!"

"What are you going to do now, Wild?"

"Well, there is no need of trying to get at the bad gang to-night. We may as well go back. They will show up sometime to-morrow, no doubt, and then we will show them a thing or two."

"Are you goin' to let us go?" Riggs asked, in a trembling voice.

"Yes, we're goin' ter let you go with us to Magic Mark," answered Charlie, with a laugh.

"We don't berlong to ther gang you've been talkin' about," spoke up Timber. "We never heard of 'em. We are strangers in this here part of ther country. We just came over from Pan Out, an' we was lookin' for a place to camp when you caught us. We ain't thieves; what you heard us say was only fun."

"That's right!" exclaimed Riggs. "You made a mistake in tacklin' us."

"I reckon I didn't make any mistake," retorted Cheyenne Charlie. "I don't make mistakes of them kind. You jest shet up, now, an' git on them horses when we give you a boost. You've got to go to Magic Mark, an' that's all there is to it."

The three horses the robbers had ridden were standing just where our friends had left them, and Riggs and Timber were quickly placed upon two of them.

Then our friends mounted their horses, while Bell got upon the extra one.

In this way they set out for the mining camp.

Just as they came in sight of the cabins of the miners they heard the sound of horses' hoofs coming down the trail.

Though Wild was quite positive that the villains were not following them, he thought it advisable to see who it was.

"Just wait a minute, boys!" he whispered.

They sat still on their horses, and pretty soon three forms loomed up.

Then they heard the eager voices of females and the tones of a man.

Riggs and Timber showed signs of great uneasiness when they heard the voices.

Cheyenne Charlie, who was keeping a strict watch upon them, did not fail to notice this.

He gave a satisfied nod, for it struck him just then that those approaching were the victims of the robbers.

The next minute the three were up to them, and Wild hailed them with a cheery "hello!"

"Are you friends or foes?" asked a trembling voice.

"We are friends to all good people," retorted our hero. "Do not be alarmed."

"Your voice is a kindly one, anyhow," and then Edward Griffith rode forward and peered into the face of Young Wild West.

"And I could tell that you were an honest man the instant I heard your voice," was the reply.

"Oh! Oh! I am so glad!" exclaimed Mollie Griffith, and then she urged her horse close to them, followed by her mother.

The unfortunate family had followed the trail the villains had left them upon, and they had come straight to Magic Mark.

True, they had not traveled very fast, since they had no idea that they were going to reach a camp or town that night.

And now they were overjoyed at meeting people who were surely honest and willing to help them.

"You're ther folks what was robbed, ain't you?" asked Cheyenne Charlie.

"Why, how did you hear about it?" cried Griffith, in amazement.

"Easy enough. We caught ther measly coyotes as done it!"

The mine owner could hardly believe his senses.

"Here's two of 'em right here. Ther other one is dead. Jest take a look at 'em, an' see if you kin recognize 'em."

They lighted a match as he spoke, and held it so Griffith could see the faces of Riggs and Timber.

"They are the villains, sure enough!" exclaimed the mine owner. "There! Isn't that good?" and he turned to his wife and daughter. "Perhaps these gentlemen will make them turn over our money and jewelry."

"I reckon we will!" exclaimed the scout. "We will do that right away, I reckon!"

When they were cornered in such a way as that Riggs and Timber admitted their guilt, and pleaded for mercy.

They told Charlie just where the booty was, which was in the pockets of Riggs, and he soon relieved the villain of it.

Then it was handed back to the owners.

"I shall never forget you gentlemen for this!" said Griffith, the tears starting from his eyes. "I am ever so thankful to you, for I am in the worst kind of luck just at present, and a friend is something I wanted to find."

"Well, you have found more than one friend, I am glad to say," retorted our hero.

The mine owner then told who he was and why he had been riding over the lonesome mountain trail with his wife and daughter.

Wild introduced himself and companions, and there was a handshake all around, after which the party rode into the mining camp and halted in front of the Red Rock tavern.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BAD GANG REMAINS RATHER QUIET.

Hen Holt was thunderstruck when he realized that Young Wild West had escaped and had recovered the stolen horses at the same time.

His rage was something fierce, but he did not so far lose himself as to make a dash after the daring boy around the corner of the bluff.

He knew that would mean certain death or capture, and one was about as bad as the other.

Leaving the old fellow called Chris to guard the ledge, as he had been doing, he went back to the cave.

Cheyenne Charlie came near deceiving the villains when he claimed that he was one of their friends.

But the ruler of the camp had recognized the voice just in time.

When Holt found one of the men tied to the stone where Young Wild West had been he was not much surprised.

He felt that if the young deadshot could manage to free himself he could do almost anything else.

The blow Young Wild West had given the man had done its work, as far as silencing him temporarily was concerned.

But he came to when the leader of the gang untied him.

"How about this, Tom?" asked Holt.

"I don't know," was the muddled reply. "Young Wild West done it, I guess."

"Yes, but how did he git loose?"

"I don't know. He was loose when I come to ther cave, 'cause I remember seein' him hittin' at me. That's all I do remember, too."

"Well, things is in mighty bad shape. We've lost two men, an' Young Wild West has got away with ther horses."

The muddled man shook his head.

"I don't understand it, Hen," was all he said.

"No one does, I reckon."

"What are we goin' ter do?"

"We must git back to ther camp as soon as possible. I reckon that one of Young Wild West's partners was shot by Chris, so that makes only two of 'em left to fight."

"It oughter be easy enough ter fix 'em, Hen."

"It oughter be, yes—but it ain't been so far."

"We've had luck agin us, that's all."

"I reckon you're talkin' sound sense now, Tom. That's ther way I like to hear a man talk. Here! Take a sip of this, an' your head will feel better."

A small flask was handed over, and the wounded man took a long pull from it.

Holt then called the other man, and they went out to where Chris was standing guard.

"Are they there yet?" asked the ruler.

"I reckon they've jest gone," was the reply. "But I wouldn't risk goin' aroun' on ther ledge, jest ther same."

"Well, how are we goin' ter find out whether they've gone or not?"

"I don't know. You'll have to think of some way to do that, Hen."

"Well, jest give me a few minutes ter do it, an' I will, I reckon."

This conversation had been carried on in whispers.

Holt walked back a little distance and sat down on a rock.

Then he took a swallow from the flask and began to think.

For an ignorant man he had a rather active brain.

He soon hit upon a plan which he thought would give them the information they wanted.

He called the man named Tom to him.

"Git ther coat an' hat of one of ther poor fellers that went under," he said.

"All right," was the reply, and the villain set out to obey.

While he was gone the ruler picked up a dead branch from an overhanging tree and walked toward the angle in the face of the cliff.

Tom brought the garments to him, and he quickly rigged them on the end of a pole.

His three companions saw what he was up to now, and they gave nods of assent.

Holt began pushing the coat and hat slowly along the ledge and around the corner.

He certainly did make it look as though a man was crawling along in the darkness.

He got the dummy well around, and then he gave a cough.

There was a deathly silence then.

The pole was shaken a little later, but the result was the same.

"They've lit out!" exclaimed the leader, jubilantly. "Now I'll go around."

The three villains cast looks of admiration at him, when, revolver in hand, he stepped around the angle.

It was a very nervy thing to do, so they thought.

A moment later he called out to them:

"All right, boys. Fetch the horses!"

They hastened to obey, and two minutes later all were riding through the defile.

Before leaving, however, they tossed the bodies of their slain companions over the cliff into the darkness of the almost bottomless pit below.

The villains were careful not to go by the regular way to the camp.

They veered around to the right, and came in from the side opposite to where the stagecoach trail came in.

They finally reached the shanty of Hen Holt, where there were at least a dozen of the villainous gang assembled.

A cheer greeted them when they came in.

But the look on the face of their leader soon brought them to silence.

"How did you make out, cap?" one of them ventured to ask.

"Well, I calculate that there's only two of our enemies left," replied the ruler.

"Did you fix Young Wild West?"

"No, not exactly."

"What did you do, then?"

"Give us some of ther stuff outer that barrel first. We need somethin' to drink. There's liable to be ther hottest kind of a time in Magic Mark afore long, an' we want be ready for it when it comes."

By some means the gang had become possessed of a barrel of liquor, and they were running a sort of opposition to the tavern.

They had been selling the stuff all day long, and the fact that they were not possessed of a license from the government did not worry them in the least.

They were running things their own way in Magic Mark, and they meant to keep on doing so.

"Where's ther rest what went with you?" queried one of the men, as he poured out some of the liquor and handed it over.

"They're dead," said Tom, solemnly.

"But we know for a eertainty that there's two dead to make up for them," spoke up the ruler.

"Yes, ther tenderfoot an' old Higgins."

"An' I fixed up one of Young Wild West's pards," spoke up Chris.

"You don't know that for a sure thing," said Tom.

"Well, I know for a sure thing that I shot a man as he was comin' around ther corner an' that his body went over ther cliff as though it was a bag of feed."

"Well, it might have been one of the regular gang from here."

"It might have been, but it ain't likely."

"What are you goin' ter do next, Hen?" asked the man who had taken the ducking with his leader.

"I ain't made up my mind yet. I reckon, though, that if we wait till mornin' Young Wild West will start in himself. He knows that we was ther ones what fixed Higgins an' ther tenderfoot."

Some of them looked at each other rather uneasily.

Evidently they did not like the idea of having Young Wild West start the thing going.

True, he had promised to show them how to run the town, but if he got after them for murder he might show them something in addition to that.

He might show them how it felt to be hanged before he got through with them.

But they drank freely of the liquor they had that night, and then they turned in and slept soundly until the morning.

It so happened that the nearest shanties were owned by members of the bad gang, so that enabled Hen Holt to keep his forces close together.

If it came to a free fight between the two factions of the miners he was confident that he would win.

But the fact that Young Wild West would probably lead the other side put a different aspect to it.

After breakfast the ruler counted up the men he knew he could depend upon.

There were just twenty-five of them, counting himself.

He gave a grunt of satisfaction when he had enumerated them over, for every one of them were men who would not hesitate to shoot to kill.

If they had their just deserts the whole bunch of them would have either been hanged or sent to prison.

As nothing out of the ordinary occurred for the first hour after they had eaten their breakfast, Holt decided to send a man out to do a little spying and get what information he could.

The man selected to do this was not one of those who had been out the night before.

He knew it would not do to send one of them.

The chances were that he would not come back if he did.

The fellow he chose was one who had been playing a sort of double game—that is, he had not shown a disposition to be friendly with the better element of the camp.

This man left the shanty, rifle in hand, and went off into the woods, presumably to shoot some game.

As luck would have it, he shot a young buck, and throwing the carcass on his shoulder, after having removed its entrails, he came back to the camp.

He headed straight for the tavern, knowing full well that he would most likely find Young Wild West there.

On the way he met two men riding away from the place on horseback.

They were Riggs and Timber.

Edward Griffiths had forgiven them for the way they had treated him, and under the earnest request of his wife to allow them to go free, after giving a promise to lead better lives, he had induced Young Wild West to do so.

"Mornin', strangers," said the spy, halting and letting the buck drop while he took a rest. "Which way now?"

"We've been ordered to git out of ther town, so we've got to go, I reckon," replied Riggs.

"Who ordered you?"

"Young Wild West."

"Well, you are foolish to go, then. He don't run things here."

"He says he's goin' ter show 'em how to run ther camp, though," spoke up Timber.

"Well, he'll wish he hadn't, I reckon, afore Hen Holt gits through with him."

"Say," said Riggs. "Are you a friend of Hen Holt's?"

"Yes," answered the spy. "You kin jest bet I am."

"Well, if Hen Holt would only take us in with him we might stay in Magic Mark."

"He'll take you in with him, all right—that is, if you are willin' to fight agin Young Wild West an' his gang."

"Fight agin 'em? Well, I should reckon so."

"Well, why don't you go over an' see ther ruler of ther camp, then?"

"There's his shanty, and you'll find him right there now," and the spy pointed it out.

"If we joined in with him we might get hanged, too," observed Timber. "You know that Young Wild West has given it out that Hen Holt has got ter be hung."

"Yes, they blame him for a couple of fellers bein' done away with last night."

"No; only one man was killed. A tenderfoot feller had a narrer shave, though, so I heard 'em say."

"Is that so?" and the man who had been sent out to learn something looked surprised.

The three soon got on the best of terms.

They could see into each other pretty well, and the talk only nerved them to do as he suggested.

Finally the spy scribbled off a few words on a page of a blankbook and handed it to Riggs.

"Go on over to Hen Holt's shanty an' give this note to him. I'll jest guarantee that he'll take you in as one of his bad gang."

"That would just suit us," declared the other.

"Well, you kin git there without bein' seen. Go on! I'm goin' ter stop at ther tavern to see if I kin learn anything."

Riggs and Timber hesitated, but finally agreed to stay right where they were.

Then they hurried off for the shanty of the ruler, and the spy went over to the tavern.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VIGILANCE COMMITTEE IS ORGANIZED.

Young Wild West had decided not to interfere with the bad gang that night.

He got pretty good accommodations for the Griffith family at the tavern, and the prisoners were placed in the little barn in the rear overnight.

As they were securely bound and the stableman kept a watch on them, they had no chance of escaping.

But the next morning, as has been stated, Wild let them go on their way.

They had done nothing to him, and since Griffith was satisfied, he was.

But, knowing that the two men were bad eggs, he gave them a good talking-to, and told them if they ever showed up again at Magic Mark they would do so at the risk of being shot.

"I think they will be better men now," said pretty Mollie Griffith, as the two men rode away. "They have been taught a good lesson. Besides, they have lost their companion. I hardly think they will ever forget us for forgiving them."

"That may be, miss, but I doubt it," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie. "Ther measly coyotes has got a bad look, an' I wouldn't trust 'em any further than I could see 'em. You needn't be surprised if they come around an' try to rob you agin."

"I hope and pray they will not try such a thing again," remarked Mrs. Griffith. "We surely have had enough trouble in the past few days."

"You need not worry if they do come around," spoke up Jim Dart. "I think we are fully able to take care of them."

Young Wild West laughed.

"Those two fellows are not worth thinking about," he said, lightly, although he was of the same opinion as Charlie.

He did not think it necessary to give the mother and daughter anything to worry about.

After the two villains went off Wild and his partners went into the barroom of the tavern.

They wanted to see some of the men about the bad gang before they undertook to wage war against them.

They found that there were several of the honest miners there, and from them they learned that the body of Higgins had been given decent burial about half an hour before.

"Hen Holt will be seizin' onto his shanty now, if he is let," observed one.

"Not if I can prevent it," said our hero. "Hen Holt must be caught and hanged just as soon as the people organize a vigilance committee, providing, of course, that he is in the camp."

"Oh, there ain't no doubt but that he's in ther camp," retorted the miner. "He's one of ther most desperate men you ever seen."

"Well, he may be quite desperate, but we have run across just as bad as he is, haven't we, boys?"

"I should reckon so!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, smiling at the miner. "Hen Holt ain't so much, as you'll find out afore we git through with him."

While they were talking the man Hen Holt had sent out to spy on them came in.

He deposited the carcass of the buck on the stoop of the tavern and came in much the same as a tired hunter would.

"A little liquor," he said to the man in charge, without noticing our friends, or anyone else in the place.

"You was putty lucky, I see," observed the miner who had been conversing with our friends, as he looked at the game the man had bagged through the open doorway.

"Yes," was the reply. "I felt that a little venison wouldn't go bad, so I went out an' soon bagged ther buck."

"Did you see anything of Hen Holt while you were around?" Wild asked, stepping up.

"No," was the retort. "I reckon he's home, though."

"You are one of his friends, are you not?"

"Well, you couldn't exactly call me a friend of his, but I try to make him think I am. I want to be on good terms with everybody, you know."

"That's a good way, if you can manage it," remarked the scout.

"Well, so long as a feller don't interfere with anyone else's business he's all right," said the man. "Hen Holt may be all right, an' he may not. That ain't fur me ter say. I do know that he lets me alone purty well."

"I suppose you will treat him to some of that venison for his dinner," went on our hero.

"I don't know as I will. 'Tain't likely I'll see him. What I don't eat up of ther buck I'll salt an' dry, I guess. If Holt wants any venison he kin go out an' shoot it, ther same as I done."

The spy was certainly putting up a great bluff, but Wild could see right through it all.

Somehow he became convinced that the man was simply there to learn what he could and report to the ruler of the camp.

"Did you know there was going to be a hanging here before many hours?" he asked, after a pause.

"A hangin'? Why, no!"

"Well, I guess there is."

"Who's goin' ter be hung, Young Wild West?"

"Hen Holt."

"What fur?"

"You heard about the murder of Higgins, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did hear as how Higgins an' ther tenderfoot what come here with ther last stagecoach was killed over in Higgins' shanty."

"Who told you about it?"

"Well, I can't jest remember."

It so happened that Hudson Bell walked into the room just at that moment.

When the spy saw him he gave a start.

"Surprised to see him alive, eh?" asked Wild, smiling.

"Well, yes. You jest said he was dead, didn't you?" and the rascal turned his eyes upon him half defiantly.

"No, I didn't say he was dead. It was you who said you heard he had been killed in Higgins' shanty. How about it, Mell? Was this man there when the shooting took place?"

The tenderfoot looked the man carefully over and then shook his head.

"I think not," he replied. "I don't remember seeing his face there."

"Me!" cried the spy. "Why, Young Wild West, yer don't think I had anything ter do with what happened last night, do yer?"

"Well, I am not so sure that you didn't. I have a way of reading the character of a man pretty well, and it strikes me that you are one of the bad gang."

An angry light came into the eyes of the fellow.

"It ain't right for you to say anything like that," he exclaimed. "I've got a putty good reputation here in Magic Mark, an' it ain't square fur a stranger ter come here an' try ter make trouble with me."

"Well, it wouldn't be right if you was an innocent man. But I'm quite sure that you are one of Hen Holt's gang, and that you come here to find out what was in the wind. I guess I had better put you to the test. Just pick up that coin on the bar and hold it over your head. Hold it with your forefinger and thumb, and look out that you hold it still. I am going to shoot it out of your hand, and if it comes down heads it means that you are no good; tails and you are all right. Now, hurry up."

The man turned pale when he saw the dashing young dead-shot pull a revolver from his belt.

The men in the place became very much interested, especially the tenderfoot.

The spy hesitated.

"Do just as I tell you!" commanded our hero. "I am not fooling."

Then the spy picked up the coin.

It was a silver half dollar, and it was his change for the drink he had purchased.

He looked around appealingly, but he saw no one there who showed any signs of taking his part.

"This are what I call a high-handed piece of business," he remarked.

"It will be when you get the coin in the position I told you to," answered Wild with a smile.

"Well, I s'pose I've got to do it, seein' that my friends have all gone back on me."

"Go ahead and do it, or this shooter might go off accidentally and clip one of your ears off."

Up went the man's hand.

He was holding the coin within a foot of the rather low ceiling now, and stepping around so he could get a good shot at it, our hero took a quick aim and fired.

The half dollar flew from the fellow's fingers and landed in a corner of the room with a ring.

"See what it is, Charlie!" said Wild.

The scout ran over and picked up the coin.

"It's heads!" he cried.

"All right. Now, sir," turning to the spy, "you see that the coin has told that you are no good. But I shan't interfere with you any more. Just go over to your boss and tell him that I started in to show him how to run the camp, and that I am going to do it, with the sanction of all the better element. Tell him, also, that if he is not shot inside of twenty-four hours he will be hanged."

"Why don't you tell him yourself?" retorted the man.

"I haven't had the chance lately," replied Wild. "But you came here looking for information, so you will do to tell him. Now, don't forget."

Without another word the man took the half dollar Charlie handed him and went out.

Picking up his game, he walked to his shanty, which was pretty close to the headquarters of Hen Holt and his gang.

"Boys," said Young Wild West, when he had taken his departure, "I am well satisfied that I have made no mistake in sizing that fellow up. If you will watch you will probably see him sneaking to Holt's shanty before many minutes."

"Well, I'll make it my business to go out an' watch," spoke up the miner who had been talking with Wild. When the spy entered.

He went out by the rear door, and went off to a place where he could keep an eye on the shanty.

In about ten minutes he came back into the tavern.

"Well, how about it?" asked Wild.

"He's in Holt's shanty now. He sneaked up an' climbed in ther winder in ther back," was the reply.

"Just what I thought!" exclaimed our hero. "Now, then,

gentlemen, get your crowd together and organize a vigilance committee. You surely ought not to let the murderer of Higgins go unpunished."

"That's what's ther matter!" cried the miner. "Hurrah fur Young Wild West, boys!"

The cheers were given with a will.

Then those who had been listening to all that took place hastened out to get the men together.

But this was not a very easy thing to do, it seemed.

The majority of the men were afraid that Hen Holt was going to triumph, and if he did, and they were in the thing, they would lead rather hard lives of it after it was all over.

Wild did not urge them a bit.

He considered that he had done his duty in the matter, though he did not intend to stop until he had kept his promise to show them how to run the camp.

There were six of the men who declared that they would stick by Young Wild West through thick and thin, and these soon organized themselves into a vigilance committee.

The leader of them was the miner who had watched the spy enter the shanty of Hen Holt.

His name was Lee, and he was quite a level-headed fellow.

"I'm in fur it," he said to our friends. "It's goin' ter be a case of do or die now."

"Well, let it be all do, then," was Wild's reply.

"Higgins was a good feller, an' jest because he took ther tenderfoot in they had to go an' shoot him. I guess Hen Holt has got to hang, boys."

"Well, what do you say if we try to get him right now?" asked our hero.

Lee turned a shade paler, but he did not hesitate.

"All right!" he exclaimed. "Come on, boys!"

"You just keep your nerve and demand that justice be done," went on our hero. "If any of them attempt to do any shooting they will hear from us."

"I'm goin' to do jest as you say, Young Wild West."

They all went outside now, and three more of the men plucked up sufficient courage to join them.

That made nine of them, all told.

But Wild, Charlie and Jim were going to help them, and they were equal to a dozen.

Lee and Wild walked ahead, and they soon were at the shanty of Holt.

Just then the door opened and a shot was fired.

The bullet whistled over the head of Wild, but it was so high that it hardly seemed probable that it had been fired with the intent to kill him.

"Don't do any more of that!" cried the dashing young deadshot, in a ringing tone. "If you do there won't be any of you get out of that shanty alive! Now, Lee, just tell them what you are here for!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE VILLAINS TAKE TO THE WOODS.

A deathly silence followed the words of Young Wild West.

He had drawn both revolvers, and it was hard to tell which he was watching the sharpest, the doorway of the shanty or the window in front.

Lee nerved himself, and in a clear voice said:

"We want ther fellers what shot an' killed Higgins."

"You needn't look for 'em here, then!" came from the inside of the shanty. "There ain't no one here as does any sneak work like that."

"Who done it?" resumed Lee. "You may as well come out and give yourself up."

Crack!

A shot came from the window, and Lee got a bullet in his left arm.

Crack!

Wild fired before the echoes of the report died out, and the man who fired the shot dropped.

Then the vigilants began emptying their revolvers through the window and doorway.

The fight had started.

But when about twenty or thirty shots had been exchanged there had been little or no damage done, since those outside could not see who they were shooting at, and the villains inside could not risk looking to see whether they had anyone covered when they fired.

There were several trees right in front of the shanty, and our friends and the vigilants had taken their stations behind them.

It was naught but extreme foolhardiness to remain in the open and run the risk of being shot down.

Wild knew it would hardly do to make a rush into the building, as there might be a dozen men in there, and at close quarters some of them would be sure to go under.

He did not want to lose any of the vigilance committee if possible, nor did he want to get wounded himself.

Thus far their casualties consisted solely of the wound in the arm of Lee.

"There is no need of wasting shots," said Wild to the men. "If you catch sight of any of them then it is time enough to fire. All those bullets that go through the window or door simply lodge in the rear of the shanty. The fellows in there take care to keep out of the way of those places."

"That's right!" retorted Lee, who was back behind another shanty having his wound bound up. "Don't waste any more shots, boys. We'll smoke 'em out."

A cry of approval went up at this.

Smoking them out appeared to be a very good scheme.

Young Wild West said nothing to this suggestion.

But he meant to let the vigilance committee go ahead and do as they liked in the matter.

Hen Holt's shanty was built at the foot of a little hill, and when Cheyenne Charlie heard the talk of smoking the bad-men out he gave a nod of satisfaction.

"Git a barrel an' fill it full of somethin' that'll burn, an' you kin roll it right down inter ther shanty from here, he said to one of the men.

The miner took right to the proposition.

"I never thought of that," he said. "You bet we'll git a barrel."

Two of the men ran off and found a barrel.

They filled it full of dry leaves, and then poured three or four gallons of oil into it.

"I reckon that'll burn!" chuckled Cheyenne Charlie.

Our hero and Jim Dart watched the movements of the men with interest.

A big crowd had collected by this time, and among them were several of the bad gang.

They did not say a word, but the expressions on their faces showed that they did not approve of what was going on.

Just how many of the villains were in the shanty Wild did not know.

But he was satisfied that there were at least half a dozen, as that many had fired from it in a volley.

Cheyenne Charlie offered to start the barrel on its way for the door of the shanty, so he placed it to his liking and then told one of the men to set it on fire.

Charlie aimed it well and let it go.

The barrel rolled gently at first, passing between two trees that almost everybody thought it would be pretty certain to hit, and then, catching speed, it went bumping toward the door of the shanty.

It could not have gone any straighter if it had been shot with a mortar.

Crash!

The burning barrel struck on one end against the door-jamb, and the shock sent it into the staves, the burning oil and leaves spilling all over the interior of the shanty.

The vigilants expected to see the villains come running out in wild disorder, but no such thing happened.

Though the building immediately took fire, no one came out.

It instantly flashed upon the mind of Young Wild West what the matter was.

The men had left the shanty by some other way before the barrel was sent down.

That was it!

Wild was certain of this, and he promptly started in a circle to get a view of the rear of the burning building.

He soon got where he could see it.

There was an open window there.

"Put out the fire!" he shouted to the men. "There is no one there!"

Some of Hen Holt's friends started to extinguish the flames.

But the burning oil had sealed the fate of the shanty.

They could not put it out.

Then they thought it time to assert themselves, so they turned on the vigilance committee and a hot fight ensued for the next five minutes.

Honors were about even when they stopped by mutual consent, it seemed, with no one mortally hurt.

Meanwhile Young Wild West and his two partners had started on the trail of Hen Holt and the leading spirits of his rascally gang.

They thought the villains would take to the woods, since Holt did not have his gang together at the time they came to the shanty.

And this is just what Holt did.

He had five men with him when he left the shanty, and he was not nearly as brave as he had been when telling them what he would do when Young Wild West came after him.

He changed his mind considerably.

If he had dashed out, firing as he came, every man he called a friend would have joined in with him against the vigilance committee and our three friends.

But he did not make such a move.

Saying things is all right, but doing things finishes the job much better.

Like hunted wolves, the half dozen villains ran when they left the shanty.

They were in the woods when the fire broke out, the miners being too busy watching the front of the building to notice their escape.

Once in the woods they felt a little easier.

The two called Chris and Tom were among the number, as was the man who had acted as a spy, and Riggs and Timber.

"It seems to me that they've sorter got us going, eap!" observed the latter, looking as though he was more worried than he had ever been before in his life.

"Jest wait!" exclaimed Holt, savagely. "My turn will come putty soon. I'm a hurricane from Missouri, an' I chews glass when I gits mad!"

This did not sound as good to the men as it usually did.

The circumstances did not warrant it, they probably thought.

To see a hurricane fleeing from what it wanted to destroy most was not hardly the proper thing.

Riggs and Timber heartily wished they had not listened to the spy now.

They felt that they were in for it.

If they had not been forced to flee without their horses they would have made quick work of getting out of the mining camp.

But now they were virtually tied to the ruler of the camp, and the only thing they could do was to stick to him and help him fight against Young Wild West and the vigilants.

"I wish we had our horses," said Riggs.

"So do I," answered Holt. "We'll have 'em afore long. Some of ther boys will bring 'em to us, so it'll be all right, anyhow."

"What are you goin' ter do here in ther woods?" asked Timber.

"Do? Why, keep clear of that gang until we can get our men together," replied the ruler.

"An' what then?"

"Fight it out!" was the bitter reply. "I'm goin' ter fight it out an' win. An' when we've settled this Young Wild West there'll be a lively time around Magic Mark for a while. We'll hang every man what don't git down on his knees to me an' beg my parding. That's ther kinder fellow I am. I'm a hurricane from Missouri, an' when I gits mad I chews glass."

The fugitive villains had reached a dense thicket by this time, and when they had pushed their way into it they found a gully that would make an admirable hiding place.

"I reckon this will do fur ther present," observed Holt, as he sat down against a bank with a big tree in front of him. "Now, if Young Wild West wants ter foller us here let him come."

"He'll come, I reckon!" retorted Chris, shrugging his shoulders. "It's jest about like him ter keep right on coming. Didn't you hear 'em say that they wanted ther ones what killed Higgins?"

"Well, let 'em want. I reckon we want to kill somebody else, an' that somebody is Young Wild West. Let 'em come! I'll show 'em how I kin fight if I only git ther chance."

When the villains had been hiding there about ten minutes they heard footsteps approaching through the bushes and low undergrowth.

Riggs and Timber, the two new members of the gang, turned and looked at the new ruler of the camp.

They saw his face turn pale.

That made them think that he was afraid.

"What's ther matter, Holt?" asked Riggs.

"Matter? Why, nothin's ther matter!" was the whispered retort.

"You ain't afraid, are yer?"

"Afraid!" and the leader of the men looked at the ques-

tioner in a way that showed that he was both surprised and angered.

"Yes, afraid! You act as though you've got an attack of heart disease!"

"You wait till we git out of this serape, an' I'll show you how afraid I am."

"All right," was the cool retort. "I'll wait."

The crashing noise made by one or more approaching their hiding place came nearer and nearer, and they all knew that it would only be a question of a minute or so before they were discovered.

"I'll tell you fellers what to do if you want me to," he said, in a low tone.

"What?" asked two of the men in a breath.

"Let's sneak away an' git aroun' close to ther barn of ther tavern. There's a thick woods that runs right up to it; I seen it this mornin'. Them fellers won't think of lookin' for us there."

Even Hen Holt thought this was a pretty good idea, so when the men started to follow Riggs softly up the bank of the gully he followed them like a dog.

As luck would have it, the ground was soft right near the bank that formed a side to the gully, and the villains stole off with little or no noise.

A little further on and they came to a grove of pines, and the ground being thickly covered with needles, they had an excellent chance to hide their trail.

When he reached this place Riggs headed in a circle for the rear of the Bed Rock tavern.

Though he was a stranger at Magic Mark, he had a good idea of how the land lay.

On they went without hearing any noise of pursuit, and at the expiration of ten minutes they were right close to the barn in the rear of the tavern.

"I reckon this is a good place to hide," said Riggs, pointing to an opening under the barn that was large enough for a man to crawl under. "Jest git there till this thing blows over an' they think we've skipped ther camp."

They did as he said quite willingly.

Holt had lost his head, as far as giving orders went, and they were glad to have someone to take his place.

The villains found quite a hole under the roughly-built barn, and when they sat up and looked through the cracks of the plank floor they felt that they were all right for a while.

"We'll fix up a scheme to beat 'em at their own game, sec if we don't," said Riggs.

"If you kin think of a way to do it I'll make you my right bower," spoke up Hen Holt.

"Huh!" and Riggs laughed, just as though he was going to be the trump ace or nothing.

CHAPTER X.

THE SPY STEPS OUT.

The six villains certainly could not have made a better move than to work their way around to the barn.

They threw our friends entirely off the scent.

When they had reached under the barn for about an hour they began to grow bolder.

The ruler of the camp started in to boss things in accordance with his usual style.

"I reckon one of us might sneak out an' find how things is goin'," Holt said.

"Why don't you try it?" queried Riggs, who took no pains to conceal his dislike for the man.

"Well, that wouldn't hardly do," was the retort. "They are after me more than anyone else."

"Well, you made a mistake when you killed ther miner."

"Who says I killed him?" was the snapping rejoinder.

"I heard you say you did yourself, when I was in your shanty."

"Well, what if I did do it?"

"Well, if you hadn't done it they wouldn't be huntin' you out so they kin hang you."

"They'll never hang me."

"That'll be because you'll git shot while they're tryin' to git yer, then."

"You seem to have an awful lot to say for an outsider," said Holt, hotly.

"I've got ter have. If I don't you'll be ther means of windin' this business up in a hurry. If I have my way about it we'll come out ahead of this game, an' we'll git hold of

considerable money an' jewelry, too. Thar's that mine owner an' his darter an' wife in ther tavern! They've got lots of money an' jewelry, which, by right, belongs to me an' Timber. Ain't that right, Timber?"

"That's right," was the quick reply.

Riggs and Hen Holt sat facing each other, and both were forced to keep their heads down on account of the lack of room under the barn.

It must have been that Holt saw a new leader for the gang in Riggs, for he suddenly pulled a revolver from his belt and hissed:

"If you don't shet up an' agree ter do jest as I say I'll blow ther topknot off yer head!"

"I guess you'd better not go to shootin', unless you want'er git a whole gang after us in less than a minute," retorted Riggs with great calmness.

Then as quick as a flash he knocked the weapon from the man's hand and caught him by the throat.

"Don't make any noise, you bluffin' duffer!" he exclaimed. "We don't want anyone outside to hear us. But I see that I've got to give yer a lickin', jest ter keep peace in ther family, so I might as well do it."

He had taken the ruler by surprise, and had him at a disadvantage.

"Hold on there!" cried the fellow Chris. "Don't go to fightin', boys!"

"Let 'em alone!" spoke up Timber. "Any man that pulls a shooter in a time like this oughter git a lickin'. Let 'em alone!"

None of the rest said anything, so Timber carried the day.

The two villains were now pounding each other unmercifully, though Riggs certainly had much the best of it.

They made considerable noise, too, and the others kept cautioning them to be quiet.

Suddenly Hen Holt drew his knife and tried to stab his opponent.

By a quick movement Riggs got hold of his wrist and gave a wrench that made him drop the weapon.

Then he forced him over on his back and got him by the throat.

"Give in an' say that I'm ther boss, or I'll pound ther nose off yer face!" he cried.

Whack!

He hit the rascal a heavy one that caused him to see stars.

"I'll cave in!" exclaimed the ruler of the camp. "Don't hit me agin'."

"All right, then. I'll take your word for it. Now, jest don't go an' change your mind when you git up."

Chris and Tom were surprised to see the result of the encounter between the two men.

They had always been of the opinion that Hen Holt was a man who would never give up.

It now occurred to them that he had been bossing the camp just from pure bluff.

They came to the conclusion that Riggs was the best man of the two, by far.

But they said nothing just then.

Holt gathered up his weapons and put them back in his belt and then lay down, with his head resting on his hand.

"Go ahead an' figure things out," he growled. "I won't have nothin' more to say."

"Well," observed Riggs, turning to the others, "if we ain't found by night I've got a dandy idea."

"What is it?" asked Chris.

"We'll clean out ther tavern of all ther money there is in it, an' then git ther men tergether an' burn every shanty that's occupied by them that's agin us."

"Good!" cried all but Holt.

"Then we'll chuck dice to see who'll have ther putty gal what's stayin' in ther tavern."

"Fine!" cried the spy.

"What about Young Wild West?" queried Tom.

"Oh, I guess he'll be dead by that time," replied the new boss of the camp.

"It's a long time to wait here until dark," ventured the man who had played the spy that morning.

"We can't help it."

"S'pose I was to venture out an' git ther gang together an' fetch 'em aroun' through ther woods to ther back of ther barn?"

"Do you think you could do it?" asked Riggs.

"I'm willin' to try. Young Wild West an' his gang are huntin' aroun' ther mountain fur us, most likely, so we wouldn't have him to interfere."

"Well, go ahead an' try it, if you've got ther nerve."

"Oh, I've got ther nerve all right."

After a little further talk the spy, as we shall continue to call him, crawled out from beneath the barn and took a look around.

The way was clear, so he went off into the woods.

He went on around, and then headed for the supply store, where he saw some of the bad gang were gathered. As he neared it they looked at him in surprise, for they knew he had been in the shanty with Hen Holt.

There were some of the men there who had been afraid to take sides against the villains, and they wondered where the approaching man had been.

As he still had his rifle with him, he decided to make it appear as though he had been out hunting, and that he had not been aware that anythling out of the ordinary had occurred.

Holt's shanty had burned to the ground long before this, and looking at the ashes with an air of surprise, the spy exclaimed:

"What's the matter, boys?"

Those who were certain he had been in the building and had made his escape with the rest understood what he was driving at.

"There was a big time a while ago," answered one.

"There's a vigilance committee here now, an' they've been an' set Holt's shanty afire an' burned it to ther ground."

"What's all this fur?"

"Jest because there's some here as don't believe in havin' an outsider come here an' run ther town fur us."

"So that's how it is, hey? Well, I know all about this here Young Wild West business, but I didn't think it would go so far as to try an' burn us out."

"Wasn't you in ther shanty with Hen Holt when ther vigilance committee come here?" asked one of the men who had chosen to be neutral.

"No!" and the spy shook his head decidedly. "I brought a young buck in that I shot this mornin', an' then I went over to Holt an' asked him if he wanted some of it. I stayed there less than two minutes an' then went out agin'."

This sounded quite plausible, so those who knew no different believed him.

But the ones that did know were puzzled.

After quite a little talk concerning the burning of the shanty the spy got with one of his own gang and told him just how things were.

"Well," said the man he was talking to, "I reckon things couldn't be any better than they are jest now. I'll send ther gang around to ther back of ther tavern barn. I'll send them one or two at a time, so's no one will think anything strange is goin' on."

"Young Wild West ain't around here, you say?" questioned the spy.

"No. Him an' his two pards an' a whole lot of ther vigilance committee are out huntin' you fellows up."

"Well, they'll find us, perhaps," and the villain chuckled hoarsely.

"What's Hen goin' ter do after he gits all around ther back of ther barn?" asked the badman.

"It ain't Hen as is goin' ter do much, I reckon. That new feller they called Riggs has sorter put Holt down a peg. It's Riggs that's workin' ther game now, an' I think he's a dandy at ther biz, too."

"What!" and the man looked amazed.

"That's right. Hen played ther part of a coward, an' it's been Riggs what's been runnin' things. He says them people in ther tavern has got a lot of money an' watches an' rings, an' they are goin' ter be ours. There's a very putty gal there, too, an' he says we kin chuck dice ter see who wins her fur a bride after it's all over."

"What's Hen Holt goin' ter do?"

"Ther same as ther rest of us, I reckon. He allowed himself to git licked, so he's got to take his medicine."

"Well, I always did think that Hen done things a little too rash, but if this other feller is any better I won't say a word."

"Well, you git ther gang around back there as soon as you kin, will yer?"

"You bet I will. Where are you going now?"

"Me? Oh, I reckon I'll go in ther Red Rock tavern an' git a drink afore I go back to ther boys."

"You'd better look out. You got run out of there not long ago, you know."

"Yes, I know. But there don't happen to be anyone there who kin run me out jest now. I'll go in there, an' it may be that I'll git a chance to look at that putty gal."

"You're a pretty nervy one, after all."

"A spy has got to be nervy."

"Well, that's so, I s'pose."

The two parted company now.

The spy walked boldly up to the tavern and stepped upon the stoop.

He took a good look both up and down before he did, though, for he wanted to make sure that Young Wild West was not in sight.

Then he sauntered in and laid the identical coin Wild had shot from his hand upon the bar.

"Give me my medicine!" he said.

The man behind the bar waited on him just the same as he did with anyone who came in and had the money.

But he looked as though he did not have much love for the man.

There were only three or four men in the place at the time, and these were those who had decided to remain neutral.

They were quite harmless, and the spy knew it.

"Things will begin to hum around here putty soon," he remarked. "Folks ain't likely goin' ter stand still an' see any more shanties burned down."

"I don't know," answered one of the miners. "I didn't have anything to do with it."

"It's a good thing you didn't, fur when Hen Holt comes back he will have enough men with him to clean up this camp in about ten minutes. It will be all up with your vigilance committee then."

"It might be that Hen Holt won't come back," spoke up a man, who was generally known for his quiet manner. "S'pose Young Wild West draws a bead on him—what then?"

"But Young Wild West ain't goin' ter git a chance ter do it."

"Well, I shouldn't want to be in Hen Holt's boots."

"Mebbe you wouldn't, but you jest take my advice an' keep still."

"I am keeping still."

"No, yer ain't; yer sayin' a whole lot that'll be brought up ergin yer when this thing is settled."

"I am, hey? Well, I might as well declare myself, then. Look out, you sneakin' varmint! I'm goin' ter shoot."

The spy grabbed for his revolver, but he was not quick enough.

The miner's weapon spoke and he dropped, shot through the heart.

"Now, boys, let's be men an' help Young Wild West in ther game of runnin' ther town straight!" cried the miner, with flashing eyes.

"Hooray!" they all yelled.

CHAPTER XI.

A LITTLE EXCITEMENT BEFORE THE FINISH.

Wild and his partners reached the spot where the villains had halted just after they left it.

As the bad gang had intended, they were thrown off the track when they reached the place where the ground was covered with pine needles.

It never occurred once to our hero that Hen Holt would make for the camp just then.

He had an idea that he would try and reach the cave where the horses had been taken after the murder of the miner Higgins.

So as soon as they lost the trail Wild suggested that they make for that point.

The men comprising the vigilance committee came up just then, and after a short consultation they all set out for the cave.

It so happened that it lay right in the direction the bad gang had been taking until they came to the spot where they could hide their tracks.

They soon reached the narrow pass, and going through it, came to the ledge.

At the angle of rock the pole and coat used by the villains to tell whether there was anyone there when they left the place was still lying on the ground.

The moment Wild saw this he made up his mind that they were not there.

After a while he ventured around and found the cave empty.

"They didn't come here, after all," he said, as he came back. "We are on the wrong track! Come on! We must try and find the villains."

Then a search of two hours followed without the least clue

to the whereabouts of the men who had left the shanty by the window.

Reluctantly Wild gave the word to go back to the camp.

As they neared the camp the sounds of shooting suddenly came to their ears.

Young Wild West gave a start.

"Hurry!" he said, as he broke into a run. "Something is up."

"I reckon there is somethin' up!" said Cheyenne Charlie, as he made a spurt and reached the side of our hero.

Jim Dart was right after them, and soon the three led the miners by fifty or sixty feet.

The next minute they came in sight of the shanties of Magic Mark.

There was a fight going on right at the tavern.

"The bad gang is at work, boys!" called out Young Wild West. "Now is the time to show them how to run the camp. Get together, and be sure that you make every shot tell!"

He unslung his rifle and got ready for business.

It was well that he did so, for at that very moment a horse came galloping from behind the tavern with a double burden on its back.

But that was not all!

The horse was none other than Wild's sorrel stallion, Spitfire.

The boy was amazed.

His rifle flew to his shoulder, however, but he took it down instantly.

The horse was coming directly toward them.

On the animal's back was a man holding a screaming girl tightly by the waist.

The villain was Riggs, one of the men he had set free that morning, and the girl was Mollie Griffith.

Wild recognized them both.

"Lay low for a minute!" he called to the men. "I want to surprise that fellow."

On came the sorrel, for the villain was urging him forward as though his very life depended upon it.

Young Wild West had halted in the shade of a big tree at the side of the trail.

Near him were Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart.

All three were remarkably cool.

The next minute the sorrel and his double burden came around a bend in the trail right before them.

"Halt!" cried Young Wild West, in a ringing tone, and he had his rifle pointed at the breast of the villain in the twinkling of an eye.

But Riggs only tried to urge the horse to a faster pace, relying on the girl to shield him from being shot.

Then it was that the sorrel did a remarkable, not to say neat trick.

He stopped still in his tracks, bracing himself by his front hoofs.

The scoundrel shot over the animal's head like a catapult, the girl going with him, as a matter of course.

The villain struck upon the ground heavily, but Mollie Griffith did not.

Dropping his rifle, Young Wild West sprang forward in time to catch her in his arms.

That broke her fall.

Jim Dart took her from him, while Wild caught his horse and patted his glossy neck.

Cheyenne Charlie turned his attention to the fallen villain, who was stunned by the tumble.

The scout quickly disarmed him, and then, taking Wild's lariat that hung to the saddle, placed the noose around the villain's neck.

Just then Riggs came to and made an effort to stagger to his feet.

Charlie helped him by giving a yank upon the lariat.

It choked him somewhat, but he got into an upright position in short order.

Realizing just what had happened to him, the man grabbed the rope and tried to take it from his neck.

"Stop that!" cried Cheyenne Charlie, sternly, leveling his revolver at him. "You're a horse thief, an' you know what happens to them when they git caught."

"Mercy!" cried the villain.

"Sartin! You'll git all the mercy you want putty soon."

"Let me go!"

"Yes, in a minute!"

One of the members of the vigilance committee darted forward, and, seizing the end of the lariat, flung it over a convenient limb.

Young Wild West did not interfere.

He knew that they were more than justified in doing it.

"Let him hang there for a while," said the scout. "Now then, we'll take a hand in the fight over there!"

Wild leaped upon the back of his horse.

The thief had saddled and bridled him, showing that he had planned to ride off with the girl before he seized her.

Leaving his companions in the rear, our hero dashed for the tavern.

The shooting was still going on, though it was not so furious as at first.

As he swung around close to the building a rifle shot rang out and a bullet fled past his head.

The shot came from the barn.

Then he saw that this was where some of the men were who were doing the firing.

The barroom was full of excited men, and when he dismounted several of them came running out.

They were those who had taken no sides in the fighting.

"What is the matter with you fellows?" shouted our hero, as he gave a look of disgust at them. "Get together now and put up a fight! If you don't I shall be tempted to open fire on you. You have got to take one side or the other, so which will it be?"

"We don't want to fight!" called out a timid fellow, whose face was as pale as death.

"Well, you have got to. Which side are you on?"

"I am honest, Young Wild West. I am on your side, of course."

"Get around there at the bad gang, then. Hurry up, the whole lot of you!"

It was wonderful to see how the men obeyed him.

Probably they thought he really meant to shoot them if they did not.

They all possessed as much as a six-shooter in the line of weapons, and they drew them.

Just then the vigilance committee came running up, followed by Jim Dart, who was leading the young lady.

Cheyenne Charlie was at the head of the vigilants, and with a whoop he started for the scene of the fight.

The few of the better element who were fighting the bad gang were crouching behind trees and directing their shots at the barn, where the villains were no doubt concealed.

As a matter of fact, they were there.

The fellow who had promised the spy to bring the men around to the rear of the barn had done so.

Then Riggs came out and told them what was up.

All of the men did not take kindly to the fact that a stranger had taken the laurels from the ruler of the camp, but they were willing to wipe out the good men of the place just the same.

Riggs made a first-class leader for them, and when he laid down his ideas to them they agreed with him.

Then it was that Riggs formulated the plan to steal Young Wild West's horse and ride off with the girl.

He had a good eye for horseflesh, and he thought that the sorrel was one that could not be overtaken very easily.

"I may as well have the girl," he thought. "What's ther use of givin' ther rest of ther gang a chance to throw dice fur her? I'll jest take her off fur a mile or so, an' then if she don't agree ter elope with me I'll take what money an' jewelry she's got an' turn her loose on ther mountainside. One thing, I won't take her off with me without she's willin'."

This was rather a queer streak in such a villain, but strange things happen sometimes.

Riggs rode off and met an ignominious death, as has just been described.

He deserted the gang after he got them to start the fighting, and he got his just reward.

As soon as he found that Riggs was among the missing Hen Holt's courage came back, and he took charge of the men.

"Riggs has gone under, I reckon," he said, "so I'll jest show you what to do."

A cheer went up from those who took the most stock in him.

They made a rush for the rear of the tavern, firing volley after volley.

But there were enough determined men there to keep them from getting in.

When they found how desperate the few fighting miners were the villains took to the barn.

They lost four men in the attack, and, as far as they knew, they had done no particular damage, other than to riddle the back of the house with bullets.

Driven into the barn, they waited for the men to come to them.

It was just at this stage when Cheyenne Charlie dashed up with the vigilants at his heels.

When Hen Holt saw them coming he turned paler than he had at any time yet.

As soon as he found that Riggs was among the missing, and now he stepped back in range of the open door to try and drop the scout.

He was going to be sure about it this time.

Raising his rifle to his shoulder, he took careful aim.

But before he could pull the trigger a shot rang out and the hat was knocked from his head.

Charlie had seen him in the nick of time, and he had prevented the shot that was to send him into eternity by firing one.

He had done it so quickly that he had not taken as good aim as he might have done.

But it answered the purpose.

"Come on, boys!" yelled the scout. "Make ther measly coyotes surrender!"

"Give 'em fits, boys!" cried Hen Holt, being careful to keep well in a corner of the barn.

Three men went down as a result.

It suddenly occurred to Holt that he had better leave.

Watching his chance, he sneaked out the back way and got the first horse he came upon.

It happened to be Cheyenne Charlie's.

But that made no difference to the ruler.

He knew that he was hopelessly beaten, and the only chance he had for his life was to get away.

The bad gang did not notice his absence until another volley came from the trees and two more of their number went down.

Then they looked around for a leader to tell them what to do.

There was none there.

Then, as if by one accord, they threw down their weapons and yelled for quarter.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Young Wild West was now right in fighting trim.

He directed the movements of the vigilance committee so well that he got them right in shape.

He went through the tavern and out of the back door as Charlie led them around toward the barn.

But he did not do any firing, for he never pressed a trigger unless he saw what he was shooting at.

But it was the best thing the men could do just then, so he let them pour shots into the barn.

"Shoot pretty low!" he cried, "and then you'll be apt to hit something inside the barn."

The miners obeyed, and the results were good, as has been stated.

Presently there came a lull in the firing.

Then it was that our hero heard the sounds made by galloping hoofs.

The sounds came from the back of the barn, and he instantly came to the conclusion that some one was trying to escape on horseback.

That was enough.

Young Wild West always acted upon the first impulse that came to him.

He made a bolt for his horse, which he had left in front of the building.

Spitfire was there.

Wild leaped upon his back and headed him across a vacant space for the woods.

He was on the right track, for he had scarcely got among the trees when he caught sight of a horse and rider ahead of him.

The woods were not very extensive there, and the fleeing man had reached an open space.

Then Wild picked his way through, and when he got out the horse and rider were about two hundred feet ahead of him.

He saw that it was Cheyenne Charlie's horse, but at first he did not recognize the man.

But a few seconds later he did.

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "So it is Hen Holt, the hurricane from Missouri, is it? Well, this is just what I want. After him, Spitfire! The scoundrel has got to be caught. Charlie's

horse is a good one, but he can't get good speed out of him, and I know it."

The sorrel now put on a magnificent burst of speed.

Holt was trying to reach the trail that led over the mountain.

He meant to quit Magic Mark forever.

Holt reached the trail about a hundred feet ahead of our hero.

He dashed out upon it, and then he tried to make the horse go faster.

But he met with little success in this direction.

"Surrender!" called out Wild, as he got on a line behind him.

"Never!" came the response.

Then, becoming desperate, the ruler of the camp turned in the saddle and fired a shot from his revolver.

The bullet clipped a lock from the sorrel's mane, making it a very narrow escape for the dashing young rider.

Crack!

Wild was compelled to fire.

His aim was true, for he hit the villain's right arm.

The shooter dropped to the ground.

But Holt had another, and he was desperate.

His left hand went up with the weapon in it.

"You'll never take me alive, Young Wild West!" he cried.

Before he could fire again the horse he was riding stumbled and sent him flying over its head.

His remaining revolver was knocked from his hand, but he was on his feet in an instant.

"You can't take me, Young Wild West!" he shouted.

He pulled out his knife and stood on the defensive as our hero dashed up.

With a quick movement Wild struck him with his left hand and sent him rolling on the ground.

Then he dismounted and sprang upon him.

One of the villain's arms hung useless at his side, so our hero bound the other to his by his own belt.

Then at the point of the revolver he forced him to march back to the Bed Rock tavern, while he led Charlie's horse.

They got there in a few minutes, and were just in time to see the captured badmen led around to the front of the tavern.

The miners were cheering to the echo, and when they saw Young Wild West coming up with Hen Holt a sudden stillness came over them.

"Here he is, men!" called out the dashing young deadshot. "I got him alive, but I had a hard time to do it. He fought like a rat in a trap."

An ominous muttering arose from the men as Wild halted his horse in front of them.

Lee, the leader of the vigilants, turned his gaze to the form that was hanging so silently to the tree a few yards off, and pointing to it, exclaimed:

"Boys, you know what to do!"

They knew.

Bound as he was, Holt uttered a yell of defiance and started to run.

But he was soon caught.

Then they dragged him to the tree and soon there were two forms dangling from it.

That was the way they did business in the wild West in those days.

When it was all over the rest of the bad gang were brought up before Wild for him to pass judgment upon them.

There were only seven of the original gang left, and they were a very repentent lot, if looks counted for anything.

One of the men was Chris, the man who had shot the man named Jackson when he darted around the angle of the cliff.

Another was Timber, the last of the trio that had robbed the Griffith family.

These two seemed to be leaders among the gang, since the head ones had gone, so Wild picked them out and told them to step up.

"You fellows know that you ought to be hanged or shot, I suppose?" he said.

"Yes," answered Timber.

"That's what ought to be done with us," admitted Chris.

"Do you think you would be any better men if you were allowed to live?"

"Yes," came the reply in a breath.

"You would do better, eh?"

"I'd never do a thing that was wrong ag'in," said Chris, earnestly.

"An' if any one ever caught me doin' ther least mean thing they could shoot me," added Timber.

"Men," observed Wild, turning to the crowd, "you have heard what the two men here just said. You will have the privilege of shooting them if you catch them doing anything wrong again. I guess we will let it go at that."

A murmur of satisfaction went up.

"How about ther rest of 'em?" some one called out.

"Oh, I am going to give them a chance to live, too. It struck me when I looked at them that they would do the same as the two I just spoke to said. If I were going to give them any special advice I would tell them to get out of Magic Mark, and stay out of it, unless they had urgent business to keep them here."

"Thank you, Young Wild West," spoke up one of the rascals. "I reckon I'm goin' ter do jest what you said, whether you advise it or not. I'll pitch my tent in some other camp an' try ter do better in ther future."

The rest of them nodded, and then Wild motioned to them that they were free.

At the supper table there was a very happy party that evening.

Wild was not a little surprised when he saw that Hudson Bell was seated at the side of Mollie Griffith and was very attentive to her.

The fact was that the two young people had fallen in love.

It did not take our hero long to see that when he looked at them at the table.

"Do you know one thing, Mr. West?" spoke up Griffith, as the meal was drawing to an end, "I have decided to stay right here in Magic Mark and boom it. I've lots of machinery that can be brought over from Pan Out, if it is not entirely ruined from the fire there, and I can begin all over again in this place. I fancy I can get a good price for my land in Pan Out."

"That would be a very good thing to do, Mr. Griffith," retorted our hero. "I'll venture to say that there's plenty of pay dirt here, and with a little machinery it would not be long before a man made a fortune."

"The only thing I had against the place was the bad gang. But now that you have shown them how to run the camp I fancy things will go along smoothly for a while."

"You bet they will!" spoke up Chapman, the landlord, who was at the table with them. "Young Wild West has showed us how to run ther camp. So three cheers for him an' his two partners, I say."

The cheers were given right at the table, the ladies joining in as heartily as any of the rest.

Wild, Charlie and Jim arose from their chairs and bowed.

The next morning Bell called to our hero and said:

"I want to tell you something frankly, Young Wild West. Though you are only a boy in years, you have acted as a father to me. I want to ask your advice."

"Well, go ahead, Bell," Wild answered, with a laugh. "I am always ready to give advice, providing I feel that I can. You may want to ask something that I could not give my advice on."

"I guess you can," was the retort. "I am in love."

"Well, I rather thought so."

"I am in love," went on the young man, blushing to the roots of his hair, "and I am afraid to tell the young lady so!"

"Why are you afraid to tell her?"

"Well, in the first place, I have not known her long; and in the second place, I feel that she is above me socially."

"Oh, yes! Shall I help you out?"

"Well—er—"

"That's all right. Now just watch me."

Wild walked over to where Mollie and her mother were seated and with a profound bow, said to the young lady:

"Miss Griffith, Mr. Bell is dead in love with you, and he is afraid to tell you because he thinks he has not known you long enough. How about it?"

"Oh, oh!" cried the young lady, turning red and hiding her face in her hands. "Mr. West, I hardly understand you."

"It is right what he says!" blurted out Bell, and then he came forward with a now-or-never expression upon his face.

There was a good laugh over the incident, but the engagement was clinched before the day was over, and all concerned were happy.

A couple of days later Young Wild West and his two partners left Magic Mark and set out for home.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST'S DUEL WITH DEATH; OR, ARIETTA TO THE RESCUE."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

How dishonest poultry dealers have been cheating New York consumers was revealed by Commissioner of Weights and Measures Hartigan. The chickens are denied water for several days and fed red pepper. Then they are gorged with water and sold. By this means, Commissioner Hartigan says, the weight of each fowl can be increased 25 per cent. Arrests are expected.

While tearing down the old Blaener homestead at Carlinville, Ill., recently, workmen found an American flag containing thirteen stars. The emblem was found near an old fireplace between the outer and inner walls. It is not known how long the flag had been resting there nor who put it between the walls. The old house was used as a hotel in the days when the stage coach passed through Carlinville.

Homer Hays, aged eighteen, was hunting frogs with a small rifle along White River, near the island two miles east of Petersburg, Ind., when he saw an otter lying on the river bank. He shot at it and the bullet hit it in the mouth. This so enraged the animal that it jumped at him and caught one of his hands, preventing him from shooting a second time. He finally shook the animal loose, and it rolled down the river bank into the water and dived out of sight.

Secretary Lansing, of the State Department, has ordered an investigation of a report that Fernandez, Havana agent for Japanese interests, secured a 60,000-acre land concession at the Atlantic end of the Panama Canal through the activity of Ramon Valdes, whose recent election to the presidency of Panama may possibly be disputed by the United States, because of alleged frauds and coercion. The report is denounced as absurd by the Japanese authorities.

Just as a picnic party of young folk from Beaver Falls, Pa., were about to sit down to a big dinner spread on the grass in a grove near Darlington, one of their number rushed in with the announcement he had discovered a snake swallowing a toad. All scampered off to witness the snake perform its gastronomic feat. When, after thirty minutes, the toad had disappeared down the reptile's throat and they returned to the dinner, they found, in their absence a pig and her six little ones had eaten the whole repast. All returned to town to get something to eat.

The use of aluminum alloy blades in the place of wooden propellers on aeroplanes subjected to the terrific heat conditions in Mexico and along the bor-

der is being considered at present by American aviators. As previously reported, the Army airmen have experienced no end of trouble with wooden propellers on the machines of the expeditionary forces. The propeller that is to be tried out soon is made of an alloy whose base is aluminum. It is planned to cast the alloy in block form and then tool it to the shape of the propeller blade. The core thus formed will be covered over with light sheet-steel. A propeller made after this fashion will be lighter than the present wooden ones and will not splinter.

The first hospital train, which will start from Chicago for the border in a few days, will probably become a permanent addition to the medical equipment of the Army. At least as long as the regular troops are on the border it will be operated between the larger hospitals in the Southern Department and the west coast, Hot Springs and the Walter Reed Hospital at Washington, D. C. Practically every feature of the equipment of a modern hospital will be in the ten cars which comprise the train. It will have electric fans, shower baths and all equipment for taking care of patients. Later one or two more trains may be equipped by the Medical Corps for service on the border. It is not thought that one train will be sufficient while the National Guard is stationed on the border.

The original Holland submarine boat is at the bottom of the Passaic river at Paterson, N. J., where it sank during a trial some thirty-five years ago. State Senator Thomas F. McCran and Civil Service Commissioner George H. Burke, of Paterson, have formulated plans for raising the old submarine, which was built by John P. Holland, a Patersonian. They want to put it on exhibition in some public museum. Holland was a school teacher in St. John's Parochial School, Paterson, nearly forty years ago. After school hours he busied himself working out mechanical ideas in an old machine shop of the Todd and Rafferty Company. About 1881 the schoolmaster conceived the idea of an underwater boat, and although discouraged by his acquaintances, he constructed a model illustrating his ideas. After the sinking of this boat, he constructed another one, which met with success, and it was purchased by the Government. Commissioner Burke, in speaking of the plan of raising the old boat, said definite plans had not yet been perfected, but that he thought it likely, in the event of individuals failing to finance the proposal, that funds for the work of restoring the craft would be raised by popular subscription. Senator McCran thinks the boat should be in the National Museum at Washington.

DRIVEN OUT WEST

OR

THE BOY TENDERFOOT OF LUCKY STRIKE

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER II (Continued).

"Why, he's ther kid who wore the burnt suit and derby. Look! He's got a disguise on now. Ther witness of the murder in Bayard street says the murderer wore a gray suit. Up at ther Windsor we seen this feller have on a gray suit what was burnt. Now see how he's rigged out. Young feller, you're ther murderer of old Cowboy Charley. Ther disguise yer have on don't go. Surrender!"

"I won't!" cried Harry, his blood fairly turning cold at the awful charge made against him, and he seized a chair.

Hurling it at the nearest detective, it knocked him down.

Leaping over the officer's body, Harry dashed out the door.

At the curb stood a doctor's carriage, a negro coachman holding the reins.

Without the slightest hesitation Harry leaped into the vehicle, and the startled darky half rose to his feet, exclaiming:

"Git out of here!"

"You git!" replied Harry, furiously.

He gave the coachman a sudden shove that sent him tumbling to the ground, and grabbing the reins, he started the horse off at a gallop just as the two detectives rushed out of the restaurant.

Yelling at him to stop, the officers and the coachman raced after the flying carriage, but Harry paid scant heed to them.

Getting out the whip, he gave the old horse a whack that caused him to increase his speed, and plunge down a side street.

"If they catch me," muttered the boy, "I will be electrocuted on a charge of killing Cowboy Charley, for I can't prove my innocence. The best thing for me to do is to get away from New York as fast as I can."

CHAPTER III.

DRIVEN OUT WEST.

The doctor's horse turned down Broadway, and when it reached Chambers street, Harry drove straight toward the North River.

"I've given my pursuers the shake," he muttered, "but those detectives will send out a general alarm to the police to arrest me on sight. If I could only get a change of clothing. I might manage to get out of New York without much fear of being colared. At this late hour there isn't a clothing store open, however, so I'll have to attempt it just as I am. This old town is getting entirely too hot to hold me. I'm going to strike out for the West. There may be something in these old documents of Cowboy Charley. If they are not a fake, I might, by the use of them, come into possession of a gold mine, and in time make a fortune out of it."

The idea thrilled the boy with hope and ambition.

Reaching Greenwich street, he drove up to the curb, reined in the horse, and alighted. Leaving the animal standing, the boy ran uptown several blocks, and then turned down toward West street.

"The police will think I've gone to Jersey when they find the rig here," he muttered.

As he was passing a second-hand box dealer's yard, a burly ruffian sprang before him, and clutched him by the throat.

"Howld on there!" he hissed. "If ye've got any money about yer I want it. Shell out now, or, begob, I'll shtrangle ye!"

"This is all I have for you!" answered Harry, coolly, and he hauled off and gave the crook a terrific smash in the face.

The villain was half drunk, and the blow knocked him down.

Hitting the pavement with the back of his skull, the thief was stunned.

For an instant Harry was inclined to run away; but just then an idea flashed across his mind, and he pulled off his big slouch hat and buckskin coat.

In a moment more he had the crook's jacket and derby, put them on, and leaving the cowboy outfit on the crook, he ran down the street.

The coat and hat made a wonderful difference in his appearance, and he turned down West street, muttering:

"If the police arrest a person looking like a cowboy, it will be that crook. His attempt to rob me is going to get him into all kinds of trouble. Now to double on the detectives, and quit the city. Here's a nickel in the coat-pocket."

He hastened up Chambers street to the Sixth avenue elevated railroad, and rode up to Forty-second street, where he alighted and hurried to the Grand Central depot.

The boy boldly approached the ticket office, laid down his big bank note, and calmly asked for a through ticket for Chicago.

It was given to him, he pocketed the change, and getting a time-table, he sat down and carefully studied it.

A train did not go for an hour, and the boy became nervous and restless as he waited for it, expecting every moment to see the detectives who were after him come into the depot.

A newsboy outside was selling an early edition of the morning paper, and he got a copy, and settled down in the waiting-room to read it.

The first item that arrested his attention was an account of the death of Cowboy Charley, and the assertion that he—Harry—was the murderer.

The paper stated that the officers were hot on his trail, and expected to arrest him before the dawn of another day.

In conclusion, the article gave a brief history of the murdered man.

It said in part:

"Cowboy Charley was a museum actor. He came from the Montana mining camp of Lucky Strike three months ago. He publicly declared that he was a prospector, and had found and staked a very valuable claim. But a quarrel he had with a bad-man known as Bill Boggs, who tried to jump his claim, led to a fight. Cowboy Charley won, but Boggs swore he would get Charley's papers relating to the claim away from him and avenge the beating he received. Charley feared the man, and, abandoning the claim, he came to New York, haunted by the fear that Boggs would follow him and rob him of his title. If it were not that the miner's murderer is known to the police it would be fair to presume that Boggs followed the man East, and killed him in a spirit of revenge."

"So that's the why of it, eh?" muttered Harry. "Well, it tells me plain enough how poor Charley came by his death. The motive of the murderer is quite evident. But he is defeated. It's a pity that I must stand police persecution for his crime. Well, it can't be helped now. Ah! Here comes my train. I'll go out and get on board."

Harry arose, and was just about to move toward the cars when two men came hurrying into the depot, at sight of whom he plunged into the crowd of passengers who were heading for the train.

They were the detectives, Doe and Roe, and he saw them rush to the ticket office, flash their shields, and Roe said to the agent:

"Say, was a boy here within the last hour buying a ticket? He was dressed in a pair of corduroy pants, an old brown jacket, and wore a derby with a hole in the crown."

"A boy such as you describe was here, and bought a ticket. Why?"

"He's a crook. Killed a man. He gave us the slip in a carriage. We traced it to a point near the Erie ferry, and came across a crook he had a fight with. He swapped hats and coats with the crook, but we traced him up here just the same. Where did he go?"

"Bought a ticket for Chicago, and he must have just gone out with that crowd to board the train."

The detectives waited to hear no more, but rushed for the car.

Harry had now learned his danger.

He made up his mind that the officers would not get him, and dodged aboard of another train on the opposite side of the runway.

It was dark in the car, and as the Chicago train was brilliantly lighted, he could plainly see what the detectives did in the other cars without being seen himself.

Doe and Roe went through the cars rapidly and scrutinized all the passengers with the keenest interest.

Of course, they failed to see the boy, and he afterward saw them hang around outside the train, watching everybody until it started.

Harry alighted, and darted toward the end car of the other train as it began to move; then he swung himself upon the rear platform, and finding the end door, he sprang inside, and crouched down.

But for this action he would have been seen by the officers.

A few moments later and he was safe.

"Driven out West, by jingo!" he gasped, as he took a seat. "And I ain't safe yet. Those fly-cops may telegraph ahead, and have me pinched along the route. I'll have to disguise myself until I get out of civilization. This has been a pretty strenuous night."

Just then the conductor came along, examined his ticket, and he then settled down in a corner and fell fast asleep.

Upon reaching Chicago the boy found that no policemen were waiting for him, and he lost no time about purchasing a new outfit.

He also bought a revolver and some cartridges, as he knew he was going to a lawless place, and might have to defend himself against hard characters.

A ticket for Montana was his next purchase, and he boarded the car at night, and started for his destination.

On the following night a man came along and dropped into the seat beside him on the fast-speeding train. He and the stranger glanced at each other a moment afterward.

With startled exclamations both bounded to their feet.

"Bill Boggs!" exclaimed Harry, in amazement.

"Ther New York tenderfoot!" retorted the Westerner, his face turning pale.

(To be continued.)

FACTS WORTH READING

A SUBSTITUTE FOR TINFOIL.

The American Consul at Breslau, Germany, reports that one of the Breslau tinfoil factories has succeeded in providing a substitute for tinfoil by producing zinc foil. The new product is not to be distinguished from tinfoil and is supposed to render the same services.

BURGLARS PAID FOR BATH.

El Dorado, Kan., has fallen heir to two seemingly honest housebreakers. Two El Dorado women returned home recently and found the bathtub smeared with oily dirt, and on the bottom of the tub two quarters. Conditions of the window above the tub indicated that the men had entered that way and proceeded to clean up, leaving the fifty cents as payment.

BASS FELL INTO BOAT.

Lytle Nail and Claude Benyon spent two weeks fishing at Flat Rock Cave, south of Shelbyville, Ind., and they caught nothing but redeyes, suckers and sunfish. The last day of their outing, as they were returning to shore in their boat, Nail struck a log with his oar. There was a splash and two bass, each weighing two pounds, fell in the bottom of the boat. The fishermen caught them and triumphantly brought them ashore.

LIGHTNING SPARED MULE.

Struck by lightning, a mule which Asa Pilchard of Shelbyville, Ind., was unharnessing, had both its ears burned off, while Pilchard was knocked unconscious. The flash also set fire to the barn, struck a cow and killed it, and then traveled down a wire fence and killed three hogs. During the fire another mule and cow were burned to death. When the storm was over, all Pilchard had left was one burnt-eared mule. His barn and everything in it had been destroyed.

FORGOT HIS PAST LIFE.

After being given up as dead thirteen years, Milton Simmons, of Kokomo, Ind., real estate dealer, has returned to his mother, Mrs. Cecelia Simmons, at Syracuse, N. Y.

Simmons tells a remarkable story of his loss of memory resulting from the Iroquois fire in Chicago. He was operating a spotlight in the balcony when the fire broke out and he was plunged sixty feet onto the bodies below, but was rescued. The fall caused loss of memory, and after two months in a hospital he recovered, going to Tipton, Ind., where he engaged in business and married. Later he went into the real estate business in Kokomo, where he now resides.

Increasing pressure on the brain from the injury resulted in the necessity for an operation last winter, and following this he gradually regained memory of his mother and his former life.

GROWING DATES.

The experiment station of the University of Arizona grew 22,000 pounds of marketable dates last season. The station has more than two hundred thriving trees. The price received was 17 cents per pound, or \$3,740 for the crop. From this it will be noted that date growing is no mean occupation, provided one has suitable land. Once upon a time a good date soil could be had for a song, but when water flows over the desert sands, wastes jump somewhat in value. The faculty of the Arizona university have conclusively demonstrated that dates can be made a profitable crop in the Salt River valley and elsewhere where soil conditions and climate are similar.

No tree is more graceful and beautiful than a date palm, and the plants make stately ornaments for lawns and parks. At the same time they grow an appetizing article of food. In northern Africa, the native habitat of the date palm, the fruit is a common article of daily diet.

HOTELS CLOSED BY "DRY" LAWS.

Financial ruin is faced by the hotels of Manitoba, Can., as a result of the prohibition law of that province, according to the following dispatch from Winnipeg to the Minneapolis Tribune:

The economic distress of the hotel trade of Manitoba, after one month's experience with prohibition, is strikingly illustrated by the closing of a large number of places and by requests for relief of some character by those remaining open.

A conference of the representatives of the Government, Commercial Travelers' Association, the Social Service counsel and the Hotel Men's League has been arranged to see what can be done in the interest of public accommodation.

The Government's first concession to the trade was the announcement that, by order in council, the hotels under long leases at high figures, based upon liquor license, would be relieved of the lease terms. This proclamation automatically resulted in the rent of many hotels all over the province being reduced substantially by the owner at once.

But this is declared not to have been sufficient inducement if an adequate number of hotels are to continue operation. Of the 180 hotels in Winnipeg, one-third have closed and the proprietors of those remaining insist that they are losing money and must ultimately suspend unless they receive assistance.

MR. WALL OF WALL STREET

OR

The Man Who Came from the Klondike

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER X (Continued).

They were preceded by a third man who was playing an accordion.

Fred ran toward them, across lots, glad of the chance to stretch his legs, and still more rejoiced at the thought that he was able to use them at all after all he had been through.

"Hey! Hello, there! Stop! We want your help!"

The group heard his cries and halted.

They were all young folks—Fred could see that now. "By thunder, old Brown's houses have tumbled down!" he heard the boy with the accordion exclaim.

"That's what's the matter!" shouted Fred. "There has been a man hurt. We want to get him in somewhere. Can you tell us what to do?"

"Why, Fred! Is it you?"

It was one of the girls who spoke as Fred came dashing up to the group.

"Nellie!" gasped Fred. "Who would ever have thought of meeting you here?"

"Well, I guess there's no reason why I shouldn't be here," replied the girl. "I've just been to a dance with my gentleman friend. I heard you were dead."

It was Nellie Eames, the stenographer, and her curiosity was still further excited when Fred informed her that the injured man was Mr. Wall.

"Well, if it's the boss, you can take him to my house, it's right over there," said Nellie. "I don't believe my father will object."

"Jack," she added, turning to her companion, "this is my friend, Fred Morgan, of whom you have heard me speak. Help him. I'll run home and tell mother we are coming. How strange that we should meet so! What has happened to Mr. Wall? How did you ever come to be out here with him? I heard he stole that Wild West fellow's money and ran away, and as I didn't want to get mixed up with it, I kept shady. Tell me all about it, Fred."

"Oh, I'll tell you later," replied Fred. "What we want now is to save Mr. Wall's life if we can."

The young man entered willingly enough into the work.

The one with Nellie hurried off over the lots with both girls toward the only row of finished houses in the neighborhood, while the other two returned to the ruined row with Fred.

"There comes a fellow now!" exclaimed one of the boys, as they advanced. "Who is he?"

"That's a detective," replied Fred. "Miss Eames will tell you all about this business. Mr. Wall has stolen money. If he lives he will be put under arrest."

"Hello!" shouted Dick Ditchett. "That you, Fred?"

"It's me, Mr. Ditchett. Is he still alive?"

"I think so. He is very near gone, though. Have you found any place where we can take him? You were gone so long, I came on to see what the trouble was. Something must be done right away."

"It's all right. I've found a place," replied Fred, "and these gentlemen will help us. What seems to be the matter with him? Has he broken any bones?"

"That's just what he hasn't, as near as I can make out," replied Ditchett; "but he's an old man and the shock was enough to kill him. Come, we must get right back."

Paying no attention to the question put by the boys, the detective hurried them back to the place where he had left Mr. Wall.

"I don't see him," suddenly exclaimed Fred, who was close at his side.

"Blame my sister's cats, neither do I!" cried Ditchett. "What in thunder does this mean?"

"That's what I'd like to know," mused one of the boys. "I guess you fellows have been fooling us."

"Shut up!" cried Dick Ditchett, "and don't you make any fool talk. The old man was here a second ago."

But Mr. Wall was not where the detective had left him.

Even his battered hat, which lay near where Dick Ditchett and Fred found him, was gone.

They hunted for him everywhere; they were still hunting when Nellie Eames, accompanied by her gentleman friend and an elderly man, whom she introduced as her father, joined them.

Other young men, returning from the dance, which had been held in a hall over a saloon near by, now came up and also joined in the search.

But it all went for nothing.

Mr. Wall had vanished, and at last Fred and Dick Ditchett gave it up and returned to Brooklyn on the elevated road.

All the way downtown Ditchett was fretting and fuming over the mystery.

"This problem don't down me. I will solve it!" he declared, when Fred finally left him.

And glad enough Fred was to see the last of the detective.

"What would he have done if he had only known about the money?" he thought, as he hurried to his room.

CHAPTER XI.

BY THE ADVICE OF MR. WALL.

During the next two weeks—which were weeks full of momentous events for the Klondiker and Fred Morgan—nothing whatever was heard of Mr. Wall, and even Dick Ditchett, who, as Fred came to learn, was reckoned as one of the shrewdest private detectives in New York, utterly failed to make any headway in the case.

And it so happened that Detective Ditchett is not in on this chapter. It concerns Jack Silver and Fred.

In spite of the fact that Fred was at the office before Jack Silver's arrival, he found that Dick Ditchett had got ahead of him, for the detective met the Klondiker as he turned down Wall Street on his way to business, and had told him, as he supposed, all which took place the night before.

"So you did a big business last night and got knocked out in the end!" exclaimed Silver, as he came bursting in on Fred. "Thank goodness you were not killed. From what the detective tells me, upon my word, I don't see how you managed to escape."

"So you have seen Mr. Ditchett," replied Fred. "I thought that at least I should have the pleasure of telling my own story, but it seems I don't even get that."

"Now come, come! Don't be jealous of the detective," laughed Silver. "I'm not kicking. You did your best. It beats the band, though, whatever became of old Wall. Go ahead, Fred. Tell us your story, anyhow. I want to see how the two gibe."

Fred assented and detailed what had occurred.

"That's it," said Silver. "That's just what Ditchett told me. Blamed strange business. What a fool Ditchett was to leave him once he had him. He's no good."

"He blames himself immensely for it," replied Fred, "but if you had seen Mr. Wall you would not blame him so much. No one would ever have supposed that the old man could stand on his feet. It was his madness! They say lunatics are very sly."

"I know. Well, he fooled you both, all right. Now tell me again just what he said about me. You skipped over that."

"And for a purpose. That is what he said about you, Mr. Silver, and it's the right kind of talk."

And as he spoke, from the inside pocket of his vest Fred began pulling out money.

He threw the gold notes down on the desk, purposely spreading them all over it.

"What!" roared the Klondiker. "Money! My money! Did he give it back? Bully for you, Fred! You beat all the detectives ever hatched."

Silver roared so loud that the clerk looked into the private office to see what the matter was, and got pushed out by the shoulders for his pains.

But Jack Silver moderated his transports somewhat when he found that there was only \$100,000 in the pile.

And this there was—Fred had counted it over more than once in his room, and he knew that Mr. Wall had spoken the truth.

Then he told Silver just what the old banker had said, and wound up by producing the paper which had come with the money, and which Jack Silver eagerly read.

"Why, Fred, this is a string of advice about stocks," he exclaimed. "It tells you just how to invest this money, and evidently the old lunatic expected you to follow it."

"He certainly did, Mr. Silver. You would have understood that if you could have heard him talk. It shows a most accurate knowledge of the condition of the market as I understand it."

"Did Wall always follow up the market?"

"I'm sure I don't know. He was reckoned very shrewd in his day, I believe, but that was long before my time."

Silver read the paper over and over again.

"I'm going to show this to Barnes & Company, the brokers who have handled what little business I have been trying to do for my friend Billy Jarvis," he said at length. "I've a blamed good mind to go in on this. If I could make enough to square up with Billy and be independent again, it would be great."

"Surely you wouldn't follow the advice of a madman!" cried Fred.

"Wouldn't I?" said Silver, quietly. "Come, boy, you never lived among the Indians—that's easily seen."

"I don't know what you mean?"

"Of course you don't; but I'll tell you. The Indians up in the Klondike have queer notions about crazy folks. You can't find one of them who would hesitate an instant in following a steer given by a lunatic where money is concerned."

"Is that so?"

"It is so. They look upon crazy people as the best of prophets. Say, my first claim to amount to anything came through having a crazy Indian as a guide. I followed him three days without knowing where I was going, and when he showed me the place where I was to dig, I saw at once that never a spade had been touched to it. He could not have known that there was gold in that dry creek, and yet out of it I took fifty thousand dollars, and it was that which gave me my start."

(To be continued.)

TIMELY TOPICS

HER BROTHERS ALL BIG.

"I haven't so many brothers, but so much brothers," is the description Mrs. Frank Snyder, of Bellefontaine, Ohio, gives of her three brothers, one of whom is now visiting her. Their total height is 10 feet 6½ inches. J. P. Marshall, of New Decatur, Ala., is 6 feet 5 inches tall; John A. Marshall, of Willis, Va., is 6 feet 7¾ inches; and P. O. Marshall, of Girard, Ill., is 6 feet 5¾ inches. Their total weight is more than 600 pounds.

MACKEREL CATCH PROFITABLE.

Fishermen belonging to the crew of the schooner Benjamin Smith, now at the fish pier, Boston, Mass., received \$154 each for about ten days at sea. The schooner brought a catch of mackerel which sold for \$7,200, the biggest stock made this season by a mackerel-seiner. The Benjamin Smith is commanded by Captain Martin Welsh, who is called "The Mackerel King."

AD BRINGS 502 DOGS.

Five hundred and two dogs in the charge of 300 boys and girls appeared in response to an ad placed in all the papers of Vincennes, Ind., in which the W. A. Flint Company asked for 1,000 dogs, to be delivered at its front door at a specified time. Three hours before the time, boys and girls, leading or carrying their dogs, were on the way to the Flint store. Each child bringing a dog to the Flint store was given twenty-five cents. A sign reading "Chasing for Flint's" was placed on each dog's back.

GOLD FOUND IN RIVER BED.

Gold has been found in the sands of the Cedar river, Minn. Samples sent to assayers recommended by the Treasury Department at Washington were found to run as high in value as \$1,664.80 a ton.

The appearance of the mineral, known as float gold, in banks of the stream, has caused the fever to spread to the surrounding country, and farmers now are sending samples out for authoritative inspection.

The first find was made by Mrs. Daisy Dalager during the excavation for a cellar.

AUTOMOBILE RECIPROCITY.

Motoring reciprocity now extends the entire length of the border between the United States and Canada, as a result of the joint labors of the American Automobile Federation.

It is now possible for American owners to enter Canada and Canadian owners to come into the United States without the giving of a bond for thirty days, which is a period greater than that granted by some States in motoring reciprocity with other States.

While there may be some delay in effecting the reciprocal arrangement at some of the minor ports of entry, the A. A. A. advises all motorists to call for the sending of official confirmatory telegrams in cases where the authorities may not realize the full import of the agreement in reference to border-wide international automobile reciprocity.

CALLED DEAD TWICE.

Peter Bauer, a piano salesman of Youngstown, Ohio, has survived the second announcement of his death. The latest was recently made in Pottsville, Pa., and the earlier one about five years ago in Cleveland. In both instances the erroneous announcements were the result of mistaken identities.

Bauer has just received a clipping from the Pottsville Banner, sent him by his brother, telling how he was supposed to have been drowned at Huron, Ohio. Bauer's insistence that he is very much alive means that the authorities must start all over trying to identify the body recently washed ashore at the Lake Erie port.

Five years ago a man who dropped dead on a Cleveland street was at first identified as Bauer. At that time he was living at Garfield, Ohio, and it was some time before he convinced the public that he was alive.

CANAL SPIES.

Activities of persons suspected of being spies employed by foreign governments to acquire information regarding the nature and extent of the defenses of the Panama Canal have made the Administration decide to request Congress to supplement the existing laws against the improper acquisition of knowledge of military and naval plans and fortifications. Representatives of the Department of Justice, and the War and Navy Departments have been in conference on the subject. It is expected they will agree upon some drastic legislation to be submitted to Congress.

It is possible the scope of the conference may be extended beyond the original ideas of mere protection of the secrets of American coast defenses, to cover generally such attempts as have been common since the beginning of the present war to destroy powder and munition plants, upon which the United States Government must rely in time of trouble.

Several military powers are believed to have undertaken to obtain information as to the character of the defenses of the Panama Canal.

The latest incident to excite suspicion is the operations of a little Japanese power vessel, ostensibly a fishing launch, which sought to obtain a permit for pearl fishing in the waters of Panama Bay and vicinity.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 13, 1916.

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Good Current News Articles

In recognition of his sinking one hundred vessels of the entente allies, Walter Forstmann, commander of a German submarine, has been given the order of pour le merite by the German Emperor, says a Berlin dispatch. The ships sunk by him, including war vessels, aggregated 260,000 tons, and their total value is estimated at \$150,000,000.

According to a story going the rounds in the Perkiomen Valley, John Conrad, a baker of Schwenksville, Pa., caught a catfish in the Perkiomen Creek, a branch of the Schuylkill River, and when the "catty" was opened, a mouse was found in its stomach. The fish, an unusually big one, apparently had made the capture while the mouse was out for a swim.

An order issued by John J. Dillon, State Commissioner of Food and Markets, is worrying commission men in Buffalo. It requires that every egg in cold storage must be stamped "Cold Storage" after September 1. Commission houses estimated that there are 72,000,000 eggs in storage in Buffalo and 650,000,000 in the State, and it was said that if the order is enforced, as it is understood here, there would be a sharp advance in prices this fall.

Surgeons successfully operated the other day on Pete Annastropfe, an Assyrian, to remove a bullet that had lodged between vertebrae in his neck when he was shot in the mouth at Van Wert, Ohio, recently, and Annastropfe will recover, the surgeons said, after having been constantly in danger. The position of the bullet was such, it was said, that had Annastropfe moved his head violently he would have died. The bullet was touching the spinal cord, and the operation was regarded as extremely serious.

What is believed to have been one of the longest tropical hikes ever made by American troops thrown

on their own resources in a hostile country was the hike made by the Eighth Company, Fourth Regiment of U. S. marines, when it covered in a day and a night, on July 2 and 3, the 111 kilometers between Monte Christi and Santiago, Santo Domingo, after fighting most of the way. It is seventy-six American miles between these two points, and the hike was the third longest ever made by the U. S. Marine Corps under any circumstances that approached warfare. With a handful of U. S. Marines, Colonel Pendleton maintained unbroken an eighty-mile line of trouble is probably due, in the opinion of Marine Corps communication, and the quick settling of the Dominican officers, to the rapid hiking of the marines to the interior of the country. The natives have been disarmed and there is no further fighting. The expeditionary force under Colonel Pendleton, of the Marine Corps, consisted of two regiments of marines.

Grins and Chuckles

Mamma—Johnny, see that you give Ethel the lion's share of that orange. Johnny—Yes, ma. Ethel—Mamma, he hasn't given me any. Johnny—Well, that's all right. Lions don't eat oranges.

The Parson—I intend to pray that you may forgive Casey for having thrown that brick at you. The Patient—Mebbe yer riv'rence 'ud be saving toime if ye'd just wait till Oi git well, an then pray for Casey.

"Whenever I get an umbrella," said the prudent citizen, "I put my name on it." "So do I," answered the man without a conscience. "The person who used to own it isn't likely to identify it then."

"Sonny," said the old man, "I'm surprised that you should tease that cat in that way." "Why?" replied the bad boy, pausing in his inhuman work. "Do you know any better way?"

Mr. Slap—What is the secret of Gildboy's success? Miss Bang—Why, he knew a girl who spends a thousand a year on dresses. Mr. Slap—Ah, I see: he married her? Miss Bang—Oh, no; he married her dressmaker.

"The slimmest show I ever had of getting a fee," said a Leavenworth lawyer to a newspaper man, "was when a client came to me with no other asset than a watch without any works in it." "I suppose you took the case," commented the newspaper man.

"What is there about betting on horse races that is so bad for the health?" said young Mrs. Brown. "I never heard of anything," answered the visitor. "Didn't you? Every time Charley makes a bet he comes home and says there is something wrong with his system."

WILLIE DALE'S ADVENTURE

By Kit Clyde

We will premise by stating that in Luzerne County, Pa., resides a rich and widowed old gentleman, the possessor of a great abundance of this world's goods, Everett Harding by name.

Harding had married, late in life, a young and comely woman who died two years later, leaving behind a daughter—the little Estelle—of whom this story treats in part.

In Harding's employ as gardener, and who lived within a quarter mile of Harding's princely mansion, was John Dale, the father of a numerous family, among them the little Willie, with whom this story will deal.

At the time of our story Willie was fourteen, and Estelle ten.

Some four miles back of Harding's residence there stretched a low chain of mountains, unbroken, except by an occasional peak that jutted up higher toward heaven.

To one of these peaks, generally spoken of as the "Sugar-Loaf Peak," perhaps because in fancy it resembled the article from which it was named, Mr. Harding was fond of retiring to, the scene from its top being a magnificent one.

In these excursions he was almost always accompanied by Estelle, either one or the other of the gardener's boys accompanying the father and daughter to carry the lunch and drink that it was necessary to take with them.

One day they started on just such an excursion, Mr. Harding, Estelle and Willie.

The last half-mile of the approach to Sugar-Loaf it was necessary to walk, and arriving at the terminus of the wagon road, Mr. Harding hitched his horse to a young sapling, spread some sweet, new hay brought for the purpose on the ground before the animal, and then together they ascended to the little table of bare rock which crowned the peak.

And now we will let Willie relate the story, although, perhaps, we may crouch it in our own language, since it is written merely from memory, and it would be impossible to use exactly the same language and form of speech that he did when telling it.

"Well," said Willie, commencing where we had left off, "well, it was a splendid morning; the air was so clear that you could see a great distance, and Mr. Harding was perfectly delighted with the beautiful and extensive view, which, with the aid of a small pocket telescope, greeted his eyes.

"Almost always he used to devote considerable time to Estelle, but that day he seemed so entranced as to forget her entirely, and when she, with her dainty hands, had spread the lunch and informed him that it was ready, he bade her eat, saying that he did not care for any lunch.

"But I can't eat alone, pap," said Estelle.

"There's Willie, he will help you to demolish the victuals," replied her father, and so the little maiden returned, and I received an invitation to join her at lunch.

"That over," she arrayed some cold chicken and other things so that her father could get them, should he become hungry, and then started off without a word.

"Hadn't I better go with you, Estelle?" I asked.

"No, I want to be alone," she replied, and then rambled away in the underbrush.

"I did not want her to be entirely alone, so when she had disappeared from sight, I arose from the log on which I had been sitting, and followed her in the direction she had taken.

"Two or three times I came suddenly upon her where she had stopped, but she loved wild flowers dearly, and was so preoccupied each time in gathering them that she remained unaware of my proximity.

"She had wandered on in this way for nearly a mile over the rough mountain path, when, glancing through the trees, I saw her emerge upon a little open, level spot, which crowned a slight elevation.

"She crossed it, and I saw her disappear on the other side.

"A moment later I heard a shrill, piercing scream.

"What could be the matter?" I questioned myself, hurrying onward toward where I had last seen her.

"Again came a wild shriek of terror and anguish and pain, so shrill that it even penetrated the ears of the father so far away, as after events showed.

"As fast as my legs would carry me I bounded over the level, and dashed among the trees.

"Could it be a wildcat that had attacked her?"

"I drew my pocket-knife, and as I ran I opened the blade, and, clasping the handle firmly, I inwardly resolved to vanquish the cause of fear, whatever it might be, or perish in the attempt.

"Finally I halted, satisfied that I had gone far enough.

"I listened.

"A strange, flapping noise, such as is made by a lot of barnyard fowl when flying, I heard rising at my right.

"Could that be the cause of trouble?

"I was going to investigate, anyhow, when another shrill scream and a cry for help came from the same direction.

"Toward the spot I recklessly dashed, over rocks, fallen trees—I went around nothing. I could not waste the time.

"I heard a low moan of pain; then I dashed through the undergrowth into an open space, and in the center I beheld Miss Estelle, with both arms raised in the vain endeavor to protect her head from the fierce assaults of a monstrous eagle that circled around above her for a moment, and then, with the swiftness of lightning, swooped down upon her, bruising and tearing her head with its cruel beak and merciless talons.

"For a moment I stood spellbound.

"Estelle did not see me; but, as if intuitively aware of my presence, she dropped her arms, and turned a piteous, appealing, ghostly-white face toward me, cried in agony:

" 'Save me—oh, save me!'

" 'I will!' I cried, and I darted forward with uplifted hand, ready to strike my knife into the heart of the cruel bird; yet, not quick enough did I reach her to prevent the eagle from again pouncing down upon her now altogether unprotected head.

"The shock was too much for Estelle to stand, and with a cry of pain and anguish she sank to the earth, unconscious, her pale, upturned face bearing the still appealing look with which she had turned toward me.

"The eagle uttered a shrill scream, as if gloating triumphantly over the havoc he had wrought:

"I stepped across her body, and, with a foot on either side, stood and watched the fierce bird as it circled rapidly about my head, uttering shrill cries and making feints of attacking me, at times advancing, swooping down within two feet of my face.

"Again and again did I make a lunge at him, with my knife, but he was always away before my blow could take effect.

"It was fearful, and yet there was a strange fascination in watching the rapid movements of the bird.

"Hither, thither he darted; up, down, now poised momentarily, now down with a fearful rapidity, a clutch of his talons at my hat, a lunge with my knife, my hat is gone, and with it some hair, which I knew from a strange, burning sensation which I felt in my head.

"Down he swooped again, following up the advantage he had gained, so quick that I could not use my knife.

"Instinctively I raised my left arm; it saved my eyes and face, but was terribly lacerated.

"Just then a moan escaped Estelle.

"Involuntarily, for I knew to take my eyes off the bird would almost be equivalent to death, I glanced down.

"With what seemed a devilish intelligence, the eagle seized the opportunity, and darted down.

"I felt a terrible shock as it struck my head.

"I glanced blindly up, I saw him coming again, I made a grasp with my left hand, I had caught him by one leg.

"I was fast becoming oblivious to all my surroundings, still I recognized this fact, a momentary inward prayer, and I aimed wildly at where I supposed the bird to be.

"I have a faint recollection of wild screams of pain—a tremor of my left arm, a heavy fall to the earth, and I became unconscious.

"When I came to, it was to find Mr. Harding bending over me, an anxious look on his features.

" 'Miss Estelle,' I gasped.

" 'She's all right, thank goodness!' fervently said Mr. Harding, and turning a little, I saw her, still white as death and much agitated, but still herself,

although she scarcely looked it, her head being bound up in a handkerchief.

"A feeling of bulkiness caused me to look at my left hand, when I discovered that it, too, was bandaged.

" 'My hand?' I began.

" 'You cut it,' said Mr. Harding. 'Can you stand?'

"I nodded assent, and was helped up by Mr. Harding, and when I had risen I saw at my feet my late, terrible antagonist—dead.

"My prayer had been answered.

"My wild stroke had almost severed the eagle's head from his body, after which it had glanced off, inflicting the wound on my hand.

"Mr. Harding assisted us both to the wagon, and drove home as rapidly as possible, taking with him the three young eagles which he found in a nest but a few feet from where the fight had occurred, and which Miss Estelle had stumbled upon, and had begun caressing them when the old bird attacked her.

"Miss Estelle quickly recovered from her fright, and her wounds, although painful, were not dangerous.

"I did not escape so easily, for my hand became very much inflamed, and the surgeons wanted to cut it off.

"Mr. Harding would not consent to it, and employed the very best of surgeons, and by an outlay of a considerable amount of money, saved my hand. See, there is my memento of the affair."

He pointed to a frightful scar, extending all the way across the back of his hand, which made me shudder to look at.

And now for a few words from Mr. Harding in conversation with another.

"Yes, I like the lad, and he's a noble one, brave as a lion, and true as steel. I have spent considerable money on him; sent him to college; educated him the very best; and he is a young fellow whom everybody can feel proud to be acquainted with. I shall see to it that he gets along in the world, and—this in private—I should be very much pleased to see him some day my son-in-law."

Some few years have passed since then, the two young people seem fond of each other, and I think from all appearances that the day is not far distant when Willie Dale will marry the fair and wealthy heiress, and thus step into the relationship which old Mr. Harding has declared would please him.

After journeying across the continent from her home at Monessen, Pa., to secure her deceased uncle's "fortune" of \$1,000,000, Mrs. A. T. Blush has left Los Angeles for her home, satisfied that the fortune does not exist. Inquiries at a bank, where Edwin Kerns, the uncle, was supposed to have had a safety deposit box containing the \$1,000,000, revealed the fact that Kerns had in September, 1915, withdrawn his valuables. Mrs. Blush will receive, it is said, about \$5 for her trouble.

FROM ALL POINTS

\$250,000 CAN'T BUY HORSE.

Solly Joel has refused a \$250,000 offer for his famous racehorse, Pommern, by a foreign buyer. This is an advance of \$50,000 over the record price ever paid for a stallion, \$100,000 having bought Prince Palatine. Pommern earned great fame last year, joining the select few who have won the triple crown of English racing by winning the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, and the St. Leger. His owner, Solly Joel, will soon sail for South Africa to take an active part in the next flat racing season.

RUSSIA'S TIMBER TRADE.

Russia must organize lumber enterprises along American lines if she is to supply lumber for reconstruction work in the sections of Europe ruined by the war, the Russian-American Journal of Commerce points out. The need for lumber, says that journal, will be the great problem confronting Europe after hostilities cease, some estimates placing the quantity of timber that will be required by the countries now at war at 50,000,000 cubic feet. The timber trade of Central Russia, it is said, will not suffice for meeting the tremendous demand, and the enormous timber wealth of northern Russia, the Caucasus, and Siberia must be drawn upon.

American methods of exploiting Russian forests, continues the Russian journal, should be introduced to prevent the trade from being diverted elsewhere. If the needed changes are introduced, it is claimed that the result will be the retention by Russia of the most desirable world markets for lumber.

CAMPBOR JUMPS IN PRICE.

Camphor in bulk has advanced from 42 cents a pound, the price at the beginning of the year, to 62½ cents, and its sensational rise is the feature of the drug market, according to the Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter.

The sharp rise has taken place despite large imports. One cause is the greatly increased consumption of medicinal grades under the "wholly unfounded impression that it possesses value as a disinfectant and bactericide in combating anterior poliomyelitis," according to the trade journal, which says the medical consumption normally decreases in the summer months, but this year, on account of the infantile paralysis epidemic, increased enormously.

More important as a market factor, however, is the increasing use of camphor in the manufacture of celluloid, fiberoid, windows in automobile tops and other nitro-cellulose products.

NEW DIMES OUT SOON.

Orders for the newly designed 10-cent pieces are being received daily at the United States mint at Philadelphia. Two hundred and fifty thousand of the new coins are coined daily, 150 men being employed exclusively in this work. Adam M. Joyce, the superintendent, said that 10,000,000 of the new dimes will be turned out soon.

The new piece bears the figure of a Grecian woman on the obverse side, and the bundle of rods and the ax of the Roman lictors on the reverse.

Superintendent Joyce also announced that work will be begun on the new 15-cent pieces soon, while the making of the new half dollars will not be started before the early part of October.

The newly designed quarter on one side has the full figure of a woman coming through a gate in a wall, and the reverse side shows an eagle in flight. The 50-cent piece bears a full-length figure of the Goddess of Liberty holding olive branches, while the reverse design is that of a spread eagle standing on a rock.

A PARADISE FOR ANIMALS.

Pierre Loti, in his book on India, repeatedly describes the fearlessness of animals in that country. He says: "My room was never closed, neither during the day nor the night, and the birds of the air made their home with me; sparrows walked on the mats that covered the floor, without even heeding my presence, and little squirrels, after an inquiring gaze, came in too, and ran over the furniture; and one morning I saw the crows perched on the corner of my mosquito net."

Describing the enchanted wood of Oodeypore, with wild boars, monkeys, and a number of birds, flights of turtle-doves, and droves of parrots, he says: "Flocks of superb peacocks strut up and down among the dead trees, running with outstretched tails, the wondrous sheen of which looks like a spirit of green and incandescent metal. All these animals are free and unrestrained, yet their demeanor is not that of wild animals and birds, for in these lands, where they are never slain by man, the idea of flight does not animate them as it does at home."

This respect for animal life is not confined to the Buddhists of Jains, the sentiment is of much more ancient origin. Pierre Loti tells us that the horrors of death and slaughter, the sickening display of carcasses of animals are nowhere to be seen, for the people of Brahma do not eat anything that has ever lived. "In the place of such exhibitions, we see heaps of roses plucked from their stems, which are used in the making of essences, or simply to be woven into necklaces."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

TOSSSED COIN BEFORE MARRIAGE.

Miss Laurine Michaelson, a Seattle society girl, and Ralph S. Montgomery, an advertising man of San Francisco, have just started on a honeymoon trip to Coronado. The toss of a coin played an important part in their marriage. The couple were undecided as to whether they should wed, so they tossed a coin. Heads were up and the wedding followed.

FROGS' NOISE CAUSES SUIT.

Because the bullfrogs made such noises in a pond near his house that he and his family lost much sleep during the hot weather, Charles H. Barton, retired capitalist of Ottumwa, Iowa, has filed suit for \$2,000 damages against L. H. Hughes, a River-view grocer and postmaster. Barton charges that the pond in which the frogs live was constructed by Hughes that he might fish from the rear step of his store.

AGAINST TATTOOING.

An ordinance prohibiting tattooing in Kansas City is being prepared by J. A. Harzfeld, City Counselor. He saw two men with tattooed arms while in a barber shop getting shaved. The sight jarred his artistic soul. "There are many men carrying tattoo marks on their bodies who would give a great deal to get rid of them," the attorney says. "It is one of the madnesses of youth. I have a friend who would cheerfully part with \$1,000 to get rid of his marks. I think the city has a right to prohibit such an undesirable form of business, and I am going to draw the ordinance."

FOUND \$1,500 UNDER A GRIDDLE.

Annie Wadler, thirty-six, of No. 228 Madison street, New York, was locked up at Police Headquarters by Detective Pflaster, charged with grand larceny by Mrs. Rachel Linderman of No. 650 Fifth street, where she boarded until two weeks ago. She told Pflaster and reporters that she took the \$1,500 Mrs. Linderman lost, but hasn't got it now.

According to her story, she was cleaning up around the Linderman house when she discovered something wrapped in cloth under the griddle, on the kitchen range. In the cloth she found two stockings, and in the stockings \$1,500. She says she put everything back except the \$1,500. She took this across the street with her to the home of a friend, borrowed a key and concealed the money.

Two hours later, she says, she thought she had better put the money somewhere else. She returned to the house of her friend, borrowed the key again, and looked for the money—but it was gone, she adds.

STORM STOPS WATCHES.

Mainsprings of 1,000 watches snapped within a radius of twenty miles of Ringling, Okla., during a recent electrical storm. "This is not unusual," said a jeweler as three men came to his counter with "dead" watches. "All over the Middle West, and probably in other parts of the country, electrical disturbances play havoc with the time o' day. I recall that a few years ago in Chicago a record was kept of the number of watches broken during an electrical storm, and the number reached 2,800. All of them stopped during a period of fifteen minutes.

"I can't tell how many were affected," said the jeweler, "during the storm here, but I shouldn't be surprised if 1,000 are out of order in this section. All day long they have been coming to me, and in nearly every case it was the same trouble—a broken mainspring."

The electrical storm, traveling from southeast to northwest and passing over Ringling and the Healdton oil field, lasted less than one and a half hours, beginning about eight o'clock, yet some watches brought in for repairs stopped as late as 11:30, which the jeweler said was extraordinary.

FISHING IN GUIANA WITH BOW AND ARROW.

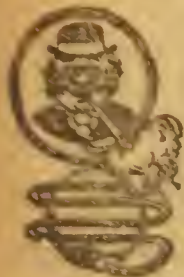
Instead of using nets or the conventional hook and line, the natives of Guiana shoot the fish with bow and arrows. The arrow used is designed especially for this purpose, and is about 5 feet in length, with no feathers. The head, which is barbed, is made from sheet iron and is provided with a socket which is slipped over the end of the shaft by a light, strong line about 10 feet long.

When the fish is struck and the barbed point is buried in its flesh, the cane shaft floats free and, resting upon the surface of the water, serves as a buoy to mark the catch, which is hauled in by means of the line attached to the head.

Fish weighing from 10 to 100 pounds are caught in this manner, says the Popular Science Monthly. When there are no fish visible, or when they are too far beneath the surface to shoot with certainty, the natives resort to "calling" the fish. This is accomplished by uttering a low whistling sound and waving the finger tips in a peculiar manner. Surprising as it may seem, the fish often approach the hunter within bowshot when thus called.

But one does not need to go to faraway Guiana to see fish killed by the bow and arrow. Our own native American Indians are past masters of the trick, and a sojourn with them in one of the Western reservations will convince the visitor that shooting fish is one of the Indian's favorite pastimes. An arrow much shorter than that used by the natives of Guiana is used, and no line is attached to the head of the arrow.

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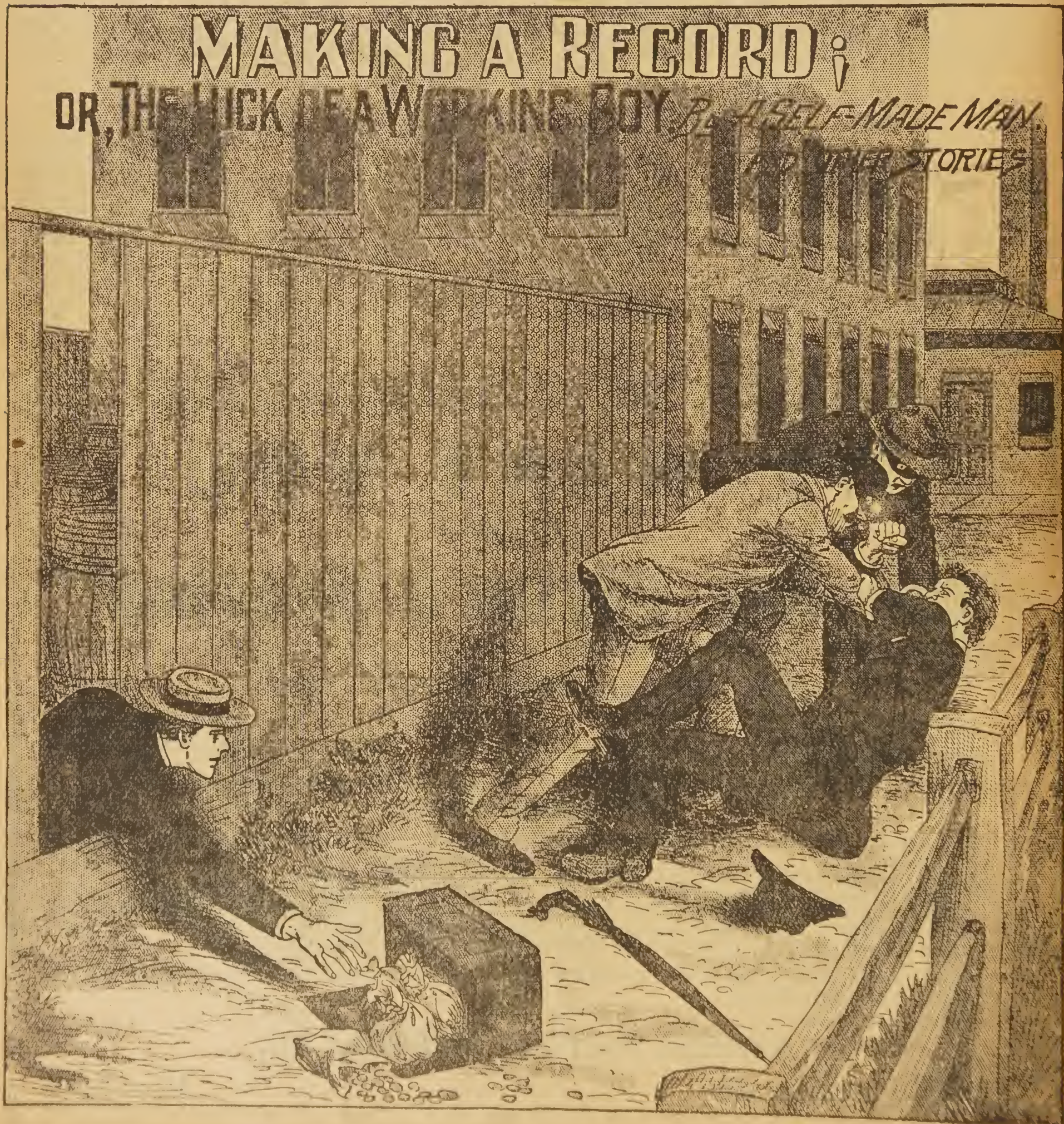
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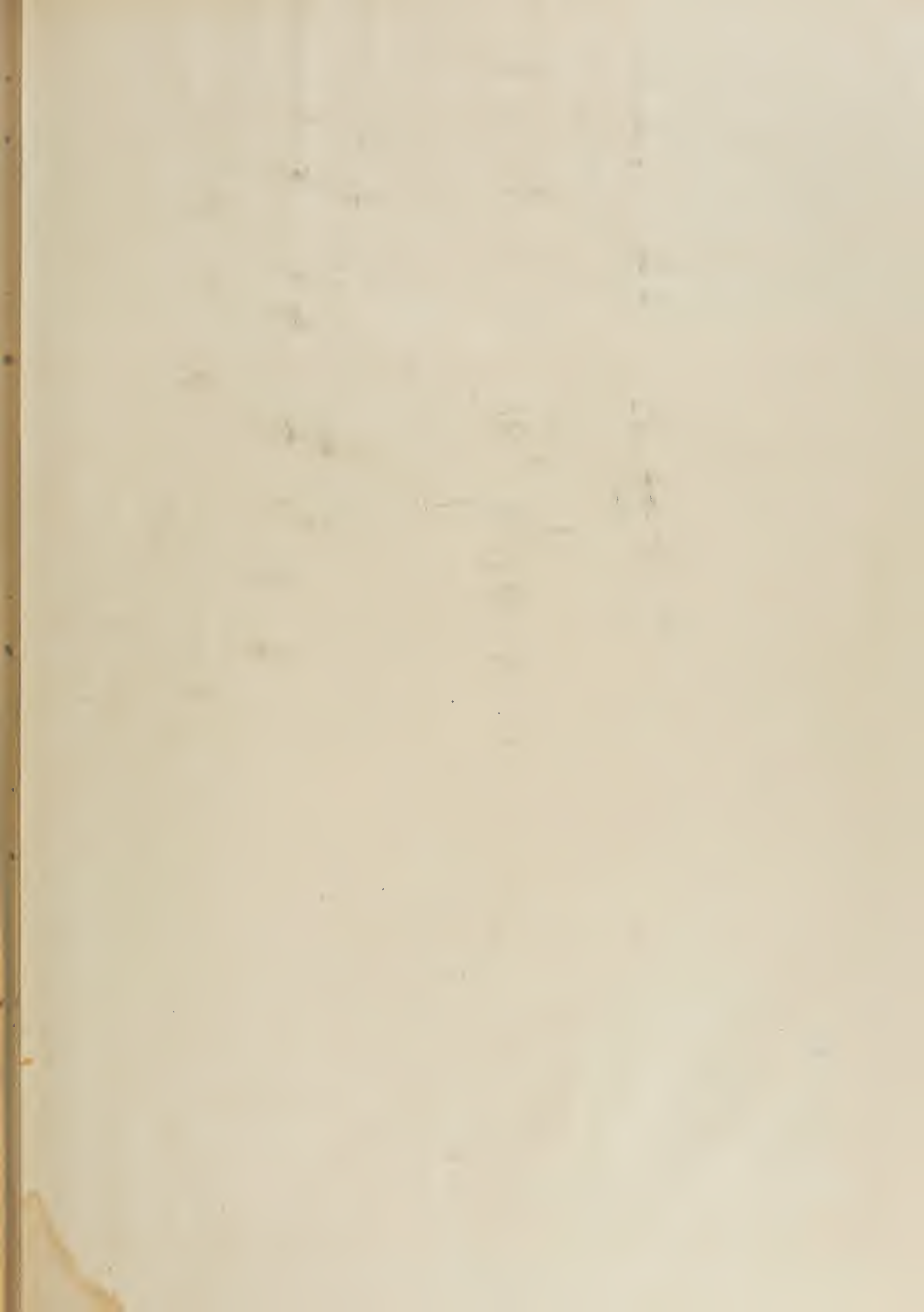
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